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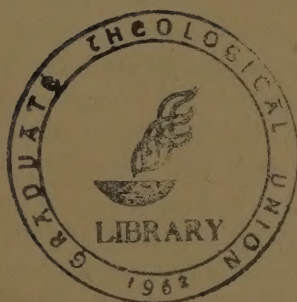
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THE THEORY OF CHRIST'S ETHICS

by

F. A. M. SPENCER, D.D.



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PREFACE

THIS book comes as a sequel to two others in the same field: *The Ethics of the Gospel* and *Civilization Remade by Christ*. In the former I gave a survey of the contents of Christ's moral teaching, briefly indicating its present-day sociological bearing. I also ventured on a brief comparison of the ethical system implied in Christ's words with some of the main systems of philosophical ethics of recent times. But the treatment was too slight and fragmentary to satisfy either the sociologist or the philosopher. In the second book I developed much more extensively the practical application of Christ's ethics with reference to some of the main problems and factors of the world to-day—war, money, politics, eugenics, marriage and the home, education, and others. In this, the third of the series, I return to the theoretical discussion of Our Lord's ethics and topics connected with them. I do not pretend that the division of the main subject is quite logical or accurate. My ideas have expanded as I have proceeded, so that deficiencies in my treatment of one section in a previous book I have endeavoured to supplement in a subsequent book, weaving my ideas into the texture of my exposition of another section. Thus, in my second book I supplemented and even corrected what I had written in my first concerning the Gospel teaching upon marriage and divorce. Such irregularities my readers will surely condone, seeing that the volumes represent to some extent the development of my personal thought. Their order, I think, is on the whole natural. We first study the Gospel, then try to put it into practice, and then return to consider its deeper relations to some of the main intellectual problems of life. Nevertheless, what I have given the world is, doubtless, incomplete in many respects.

My hope and prayer is that others may follow up some lines of thought which I have indicated, and pay attention to aspects which I have neglected. The subject of the significance of the ethical teaching of Christ—even in dissociation from His other teaching—both for thought and action, is too vast for one mind in one lifetime to work through and expound. It is marvellous that the very slender record of Christ's words and deeds, small indeed in comparison with the writings and biographies of famous men in the modern, or even in the ancient, world, should contain such abundance of meaning, so that centuries of theologizing have not been able to exhaust it. But that is because these few pages contain the enunciation of certain grand principles of life, such as the Golden Rule and love for God, together with brief sayings and discourses of exquisite beauty and astonishing profundity, and a record of Christ's death, which, though from the modern standpoint exceedingly condensed, is yet sufficient to display the working of tremendous forces of evil and the triumphant defiance of them by means of devotion to God and compassion for mankind. This brevity is surely Providential, since it enables the less intelligent to become acquainted with the whole of the Gospel record, and also affords more suitable material for meditation than would books of the length to which we are accustomed to-day, since it is easier to fix the mind on a sentence than on a treatise. But these sayings of Christ, which would amount to the length of two or three articles in a journal, have constantly been revealing fresh aspects of His mind—His humour, for instance, His psychological understanding of character, His sociological idealism. So much wisdom and beauty and humanity in concentrated expression! Yet those who believe in the Living Christ are confident that His teaching did not cease with His death, and that those

who try to get His point of view by the study of His recorded words of so many centuries ago may thereby come into contact with His inspiration now, drawing from His wisdom concerning the modern world and its problems. However unprovable such a hypothesis may be, it will yet furnish to many an additional motive for the patient and careful study of the ethics of Jesus.

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THE THEORY OF CHRIST'S ETHICS

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

I

OLD TESTAMENT ETHICS

THERE are certain outstanding characteristics of Hebrew ethics which we find also, more or less prominent, in Our Lord's ethics also. We may tabulate them as follows:—

- (1) Morality rests on a religious basis. It is regarded as derived from the will of God.
- (2) It is connected with the expectation of a Divine or Heaven-sent Ruler, later called "the Messiah", or "the Christ".
- (3) It is strongly altruistic and humanitarian.
- (4) It is idealistic, in the sense that it is regarded as preparing for a glorious future.

(1) Dr. T. B. Strong, in the article on "Ethics" in *Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible*, writes thus: "Morality is to them [the Israelites] the embodied will of God. It follows necessarily from this that there are, roughly speaking, two, and only two, questions for Jewish moralists: (1) What conduct does God command? (2) What conduct does God forbid?" This, thinks Dr. Strong, explains why the ethical questions which interested Greek philosophers and other philosophers in subsequent ages—concerning the moral ideal, the *summum bonum*, sanctions, conscience—hardly existed for the Hebrews. At the same time this derivation of all conduct from the will of God did not prevent them from believing to be right what we should regard as extremely cruel and wicked, particularly in conduct relating to foreigners. Thus they held themselves

in duty bound to exterminate the Canaanites and other hostile tribes. Accordingly Samuel to Saul: "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (1 Samuel xv. 2, 3). Moreover, slavery, polygamy, and even prostitution were allowed. On the other hand, in the Ten Commandments some of the more obvious forms of crime—murder, theft, adultery, perjury—are forbidden, filial obligation is recognized, and some attempt is made to strike at the roots of crime, in the condemnation of coveting or illicit desire.

As the conception of the Divine nature becomes refined, so does the conduct judged pleasing to Him become less barbarous and more humane. Even Amos, the earliest of the prophets whose writings have come down to us, declares the wrath of God against the nations for their inhumanities. Hosea regards the slaughter of the descendants of Ahab by Jehu as a crime: "I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu" (cf. 2 Kings x. 30). And in his contemporary, Micah, we find this magnificent summary of morality: "He hath shown thee, O man, what is good: And what is the Lord seeking from thee, but to do justice and love mercy, and humbly to walk with thy God?"¹

The notion of the paternal relation of God to His people, and indeed to all mankind, is implicit in much of the Old Testament. God "made man in His own image". The Psalmist speaks beautifully of the Divine compassion: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." In Hosea, God is represented as a tender father to Israel: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. . . . I taught Ephraim to walk." In Trito-Isaiah: "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them: and He bare them and carried them all the days of old. . . . Thou art our Father, though Abraham

¹ G. A. Smith, *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, p. 424.

knoweth us not, and Israel doth not acknowledge us: Thou, O Lord, art our Father." Hence, in spite of the awful holiness of God, men are to be like God in character and conduct, the words "righteous" and "righteousness" being frequently applied both to God and to those who obey Him. He is represented as ready to forgive the repentant, as by Jeremiah: "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more." As Dr. Scullard well writes: "It was this human view of God, God as fulfilling human functions and ministering in human ways to His people, that gave the highest ethical significance to the religion of Israel."¹ God not only commands men as a King, but draws them as a Father, forgives them as a Father, even helps them as a Father to turn from wickedness to goodness.

(2) It is apparent in Isaiah how the prophet's hope of a purified and restored nation leads on to the expectation of a king, sent and blessed by Heaven, who will keep the nation in the ways of righteousness: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Thou hast multiplied the nation² and hast increased the joy." This is followed by the prediction of Yahweh's destruction of war: "For every boot of noisily tramping warrior, and war-cloak drenched with blood, shall be burnt, be made food for flames."³ Then comes the famous Messianic passage: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. . . . Wonder-Counsellor, Hero-God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace." His character as ruler is more fully delineated in the subsequent chapter: "Ripeness, but also sharpness, of mind; moral decision and heroic energy; piety in its two forms, of knowing the will of God, and feeling the constraint to perform it."⁴ Under his wise and kindly but firm government justice will prevail, even Nature will be at peace, and all the

¹ *The Ethics of the Gospel and the Ethics of Nature*, p. 29.

² "Exultation" according to a widely accepted emendation.

³ Translated by G. H. Box.

⁴ G. A. Smith, *The Book of Isaiah*, vol. i, p. 181.

nations of the world will experience the blessings of his rule.¹ That the moral ideal could not be nationally, still less internationally, realized, except through the agency of a great and dominating personality, constituted one motive for the expectation of a Heaven-sent King.

(3) In spite of the above-mentioned barbarities, permitted or even enjoined in the earlier stages of Hebrew religion, there was a strong altruistic strain in the Old Testament rules of conduct. Even in the more primitive Hebrew laws and national disposition we find what have been called "rights of kindness"²:—

- (1) Good will. All Israelites are to regard one another as brothers and neighbours.
- (2) Peaceableness; for instance, between Abraham and Lot.
- (3) Forgiveness of injuries; for instance, Joseph's forgiveness of his brothers and David's forgiveness of Saul.
- (4) Friendship; as between David and Jonathan.
- (5) Gratitude; for instance, David's gratitude to Barzillai for helping him escape from Absalom.
- (6) Fidelity; between friends, and in servants to masters.
- (7) Hospitality; as when Laban entertains Jacob and Jethro entertains Moses.
- (8) Generosity; for instance, Solomon to the Queen of Sheba; but more especially to the poor, as in the enactments in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, that the gleanings of fields and orchards are to be left for the poor.
- (9) To all this we may add the commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself", which first appears in the "Holiness Code" (included in the

¹ Recent critics have doubted whether these Messianic prophecies are Isaiah's, though to my mind they have the genuine ring of Isaiah's incomparable style. See G. Buchanan Gray's commentary. The point is not important for the argument.

² I take the list from Dr. Paton's article, "Early Hebrew Ethics", in the volume *The Evolution of Ethics*, edited by E. H. Sneath, adding my own illustrations.

Book of Leviticus (xix. 18) and dated about the seventh century B.C.), though it originally bore the very limited sense of prohibiting vengeance and ill-will against fellow-countrymen.

The prophets advanced far beyond the Law in their broad humanitarianism. They denounced usury and profiteering in general, including the formation of big estates. Justice to the fatherless and widows they almost make a test of virtue in general. What we may even call a socialistic or egalitarian trend appears in the identification by both prophets and psalmists of "rich" with proud oppressor, and of "poor" with pious oppressed. Hosea's words, quoted more than once by Christ, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice", are typical of the best in the prophets. The Sapiential Books, probably post-exilic, carry on this tradition of kindness, as in the words, "If thine enemy hunger, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink" (Proverbs xxv. 21). On the other hand, even in the prophetic period, Hebrew moral ideas are defective in their comparative disregard of the welfare of foreigners, their occasional lapse into vindictiveness, and their failure to attain, if we except the Servant Songs of Deutero-Isaiah, to the vision of self-sacrifice. All this deficiency corresponds to the absence of definite conceptions of immortality.

(4) The reward of good conduct is declared to be prosperity. "The social ideals of the prophets are shown not merely by their direct teaching, but also by their pictures of the good time coming. After the blow has fallen, the remnant that is left shall repent; then the nation shall be restored."¹ So in the grand words which open the book of Deutero-Isaiah: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished." Most of the books of Old Testament prophecy have a happy ending, though in some cases, for

¹ L. B. Paton, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

instance in Amos, it may have been a later addition. A good time is coming, not only for Israel, but for the whole of humanity, if and when God's law is obeyed—this is the culminating thought of Hebrew prophecy: "The earth shall be full of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." In this way the prophets unite virtue and value. The united practice of virtue will produce a united achievement and enjoyment of value. In that sense the prophets were idealists to the core. They believed in a transcendently glorious purpose of God for humanity, which only waited for the co-operation of humanity to be carried into effect, and Israel had the mission of leading the other nations in the ways of the Lord.

All this seems to leave out of account the individual and the other side of death. But with the disruption of national life in the Babylonian captivity we see the rise of more individualistic conceptions in ethics, particularly in Ezekiel. He threatens the individual wicked man that "he shall die", "he shall die in his sins", though in what way the death of the sinner differs from the death of the righteous, the prophet omits to explain. We stand here on the verge of the problem of the future life, which pushes its way into later Hebrew thought and leaves an occasional mark in the canonical scriptures. But the ideal to be won by righteous conduct remains social and earthly to the end. In the very late interpolated 26th chapter of Isaiah,¹ the reward of the righteous is depicted as resurrection into a regenerated world: "Thy dead shall arise: awake and shout for joy, ye that dwell in the dust. For a dew of lights is Thy dew, O Yahweh, and Earth shall bring forth shades."

II

LATER JEWISH ETHICS

In order to know the background of Our Lord's teaching with any approach to completeness we must take into our view the kindred ideas expressed in the literature of the post-

¹ Dated by G. H. Box, *circa* 332 B.C.

canonical period. The humanitarian and altruistic strain is here strongly developed. In Tobit we find almsgiving commended: "Give of thy bread to the hungry, and of thy garments to them that are naked: of all thine abundance give alms; and let not thine eye be envious when thou givest alms." Also the Golden Rule in a negative form: "Do to no man what thou hatest."

But the nearest approximation to the morals of the New Testament is to be found in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, one of the apocalyptic writings, dated a little before 100 B.C. Dr. R. H. Charles declares that it is "the first literary authority which conjoins the two great commands of love to God and love to neighbour".¹ The following are extracts from his translation, grouped under different headings:—

(1) *Kindness, mercy, love.*

Have compassion in your hearts, my children, because even as a man doeth to his neighbour, even so will the Lord to him (Zebulun v. 3).

Love the Lord through all your life, and one another with a true heart (Dan v. 3).

Love the Lord and your neighbour (Issachar v. 2).

(2) *Forgiveness.*

Love ye one another from the heart; and if a man sin against thee, cast forth the poison of hate and speak peaceably unto him, and in thy soul hold not guile; and if he confess and repent, forgive him. But if he deny, do not get into a passion with him, lest catching the poison from thee he take to swearing, and so thou sin doubly. . . . And though he deny it and yet have a sense of shame when reproved, give over reproving him. For he who denieth may repent, so as not to wrong thee; yea, he may also honour thee, and be at peace with thee. But if he be shameless and persisteth in his wrong-doing, even so forgive him from the heart and leave to God the avenging (Gad vi. 3 foll.).

Dr. Charles remarks that "forgive" in this last sentence has not the full meaning of restoration to fellowship as above, but signifies the banishment of personal resentment, and thus

¹ *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, edited by R. H. Charles.

is practically equivalent to the phrase "cast forth the poison of hate". This passage breathes a delicate sense of forbearance and tactful consideration for the moral welfare of those who offend us. It has not the brief directness of Christ's sayings on the same subject, but may be thought to declare nothing which He would have not have endorsed.

(3) *Chastity.*

He that hath a pure mind in love, looketh not after á'woman with a view to fornication; for he hath no defilement in his heart, because the Spirit of God resteth on him (Benjamin viii. 2).

This immediately reminds us of Matthew v. 27, 28.

Among verbal resemblances to the Gospel in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs we may notice the phrase "disfigure the face" (*ἀφανίζειν τὸ πρόσωπον*), also the following passage:—

I was beset with hunger, and the Lord nourished me. I was alone, and God comforted me; I was sick, and the Lord visited me; I was in prison, and my God showed favour unto me; in bonds and He released me (Joseph i. 5, 6).

The phrases of the description of the judgment of the nations in Matthew xxv. have the same humanitarian ring. All this similarity makes it seem likely that Our Lord had read and approved of the book. We may add that the author predicts the salvation of the Gentiles along with the Israelites.

It is probable that the ethical attitude of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs influenced many of the religious teachers in the time of Our Lord, in particular Hillel and Shammai, two eminent Rabbis in the reign of Herod. The former came from Babylonia, the latter was a native Judæan. They founded two schools of thought, differing in the manner indicated by the proverbial saying: "Hillel looses, and Shammai binds"; the contrast between easygoing humanity and rigorous moralism. There was a well-known anecdote about the former. A would-be proselyte asked to be taught the whole law while he stood on one foot, and Hillel replied: "That which thou hatest do not to thy fellow; this is the

whole Law; the rest is commentary, go and learn it.”¹ Also the following is attributed to him: “Be disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving mankind and drawing them to the Law.”² This reminds us of the words of Christ: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.” Both sayings indicate the redemptive power of kind deeds. However, in the matter of divorce Hillel may be regarded as more remote from the Gospel standpoint than his rival Shammai. The latter would permit divorce only for unchastity: the former on lesser grounds, such as bad cooking. But Our Lord combined great leniency to the sinner with strictness in the moral standard.³

The humane tradition of the school of Hillel lasted on beyond the fall of Jerusalem, and was further developed by Gamaliel II (grandson of the Gamaliel of the Acts), Akiba, and other teachers, till it became embodied in the Mishnah, which was the expression of Rabbinic Judaism, codified by the Patriarch Judah about A.D. 200. Akiba is reported to have called “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” “the greatest general principle in the Law”. Among other sayings of his the following is remarkable: “Beloved is man in that he was created in the image of God.”⁴ It is no doubt conceivable, if not probable, that the ethics of later Judaism were to some degree influenced by Christian teaching and example.

III

THE GOSPEL ETHICS

We are now in a position to examine Our Lord's moral teaching, to see how far it corresponds to and develops the traditional morals of His Hebrew and Judaistic antecedents.

¹ I. Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels*, vol. i, 24.

² G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, vol. ii, p. 196.

³ *Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible*, “Marriage.”

⁴ I. Abrahams, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 20.

(1) Righteousness, or goodness, was certainly to Jesus equivalent to doing the will of God—that is, to doing what God desires human beings to do. He implied this when He declared that His true relations are those that do the will of His Heavenly Father. The connection between human righteousness and the Divine will is more intimate in the Gospel than in the Old Testament, because Jesus definitely bids men call God “Our Father”. It follows that man’s truest nature is to act and to be like God, to become perfect as God is perfect, through behaving to others as God behaves.

Conduct and religion are further linked by Our Lord by means of the application of the concept of the family to describe the mutual relations of God and human beings. Since God is Father, human beings are, or at least may become, brethren of one another, as He said: “One is your Father, even God; and ye are all brethren.” It follows that we should treat one another with the kindness and affection appropriate to brothers and sisters.

From this—as well as from His calling the commandment to love God the greatest commandment, and the commandment to love our neighbours the second—we should infer that love for man is derived from love to God rather than vice versa; that morality springs out of religion rather than religion out of morality. On the other hand, He intimated that in practice moral obligation should sometimes be preferred to religious observance, as when He told His hearers to make up their quarrels before they offered their gifts upon the altar, and twice quoted the famous words of Hosea: “I will have mercy and not sacrifice.” That He held that great tasks undertaken at God’s behest must not be deferred or interrupted in order to do services to others or to gratify natural affections is not really in conflict with this. When He showed reluctance to help the Syro-Phœnician woman, and when He bade aspirants to discipleship not to be hindered or diverted by the ties and appeals of the home, He was not so much preferring love for God to love for man as demanding that important enterprises

for the lasting benefit of mankind should not be spoilt by the distraction or delay involved in doing comparatively trifling deeds of kindness. Love for God can never interfere with the service of man in the highest sense.

Also in order of growth it is natural that love for other human beings should precede love for God. As modern psychology teaches, children's affection for and trust in their parents prepares them for religious devotion with the coming of adolescence. It may be said that Jesus implicitly recognized this in teaching people to regard the Creator as the Universal Parent. Then again, we can well imagine Him commending a humanitarian agnostic as one who was not far from the Kingdom of Heaven. Yet it remains true, according to Jesus, that love for God is ideally prior to love for human beings. For it is because God is what He is that human beings are worth loving. Because they are capable of living and growing in the likeness of God, and because God arranges the world to favour this, and moreover fosters this life and growth by spiritual communion with them, therefore it is incumbent on us to help others in love. God being what Jesus taught us that He is, we are relieved of much doubt and anxiety as to what to do for our fellow-creatures. The supreme service which we can render them is to encourage them to behave and to become as God requires of them, and as God acts and is in Himself.

(2) In so far as Jesus did in some sense claim to be the Messiah, He attributed ethical significance to His Person. He would help men to fulfil the moral ideal, but not—at least at the commencement—in the manner predicted in certain of the ancient prophecies. His was to be an authority of persuasion and appeal, not of force.

However, if we are to judge by His recorded words, belief in Him as the Messiah He regarded as a less general and necessary condition of moral goodness than love for God. For He began by expounding the laws of God's Kingdom, not by proclaiming His Messiahship. He expected people to do what He told them, not because He told them, but because of the

self-evident validity of His precepts to the conscience and spiritual judgment of those who sincerely desired to do righteousness. Yet once they hearkened in real earnest to His behests, they would conceive a loyalty and devotion to Him and come to follow Him as God's Representative on earth. He recognized goodness in those who did not know Him—in the woman casting her little all into the Temple treasury, in innocent children, in all meek and charitable souls. But He aspired to draw out and develop this goodness, as in the Rich Young Ruler, whom He loved for what he was already, but whom He wished to transform into an ardent disciple and worker for the Kingdom of God.

How far and in what sense may we call Our Lord's ethics Christocentric? A crucial passage for deciding this question is the description of the judgment of the nations (Matt. xxv. 31-46). The one criterion is whether these Gentiles or heathen, as they seem to be, have or have not succoured the "brethren" of the Son of Man in various forms of want or distress: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these My brethren, even these least, ye did it unto Me. . . . Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto Me." It seems manifest from this passage that He was prepared to recognize as real goodness merciful deeds performed by men who knew neither Him nor even the God whom He came to reveal. But what does "brethren" mean? Are the heathen to be consigned to Heaven or to hell according as they have or have not helped believers in Christ? The difficulty of such an interpretation is that the vast majority of them would never have had an opportunity of showing kindness to Christians, at least in the early centuries of Christianity. Whatever the Evangelist may have understood by "brethren", it is difficult to suppose that Jesus meant anything else but "human beings". Wherefore we may believe that He did regard natural kindness or callousness, under any and every form of religion or irreligion, as real moral worth or unworth, and as respectively fitting or unfitting the soul for a higher state of life. On the other hand, the name

"brethren" does suggest that the chief reason for helping others is that everyone has some kinship to Christ, in virtue of which he is a being eminently worth succouring, since through that succour the Christ nature in him may be stimulated, drawn out, and eventually developed into living spiritual sonship to God Almighty.

In the Fourth Gospel the significance of Jesus for conduct, as well as for religion, is described in the terms of the Christ-mysticism that pervades the book. Jesus will enable those who believe in Him to do good works, through constant spiritual contact with them, or presence in them. This is definitely stated under the symbol of the True Vine: "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, so neither can ye, except ye abide in Me." This provokes the query, whether morally good and useful works have never been done by some who had not heard of Christ, or by others who, having heard of Him, have not regarded Him as the Son of God. This saying seems to conflict with the frank approval by Jesus of several who were not His disciples, as when He said, "He that is not against us is on our part."

However much we may be impelled or inclined to deny the strict historicity of the discourses in the Fourth Gospel, we cannot refuse to recognize in them profound spiritual insight according to the mind of Christ. We feel that there must be a truth in them, even if we think it probable that they have proceeded largely from subsequent meditation on Jesus on the part of a disciple—a truth consistent with the more obvious truth declared by the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels. It seems best, then, to take these words as applying in the first instance, as indeed they literally do, only to the actual Apostles, and therefore as signifying that unless the Apostles remained in spiritual contact with the Risen Christ they would be unable to carry out their Apostolic mission—that of spreading and establishing Christianity in the world. From the saying thus interpreted we may proceed to generalize a statement of the relation of religion to morality: that the

more spiritual the moral task the less is man capable of fulfilling it apart from Divine aid, sought and obtained through the channels which God has appointed. Even a wicked cultivator of the soil may produce wholesome food for mankind. A sceptical and loose-living, but humane and idealistic, statesman may promote international peace—more, let us say, than one of orthodox beliefs and irreproachable habits, but imbued with a narrow and chauvinistic patriotism. But only those who are in living fellowship with Christ, if not consciously at least unconsciously (for we may believe that unconscious participation in His Spirit is a real, though not the most effective, form of communion with Him), can lead men into spiritual sonship to their Heavenly Father.

If we attend to the New Testament, the ethical importance of the Person of Christ was fulfilled through His death and resurrection. As I attempt to show in a subsequent chapter, the comparative failure of His mission as Teacher seems to have made Him realize more vividly His mission as Redeemer. It is as if the Cross were needed to give effect to the Sermon on the Mount. This is virtually asserted in the Johannine and Pauline writings, as in the following: "The Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." "We preach Christ crucified . . . the power of God and the wisdom of God." It is the crucified and risen Christ who, by means of men's faith in Him, inspires them with the will and ability both to love God with their heart and mind and will, and to love their neighbours as themselves. Did He not go to His death with the assurance that thereby He would accomplish His religious and moral mission for the erring and ailing race of men?

(3) It needs no argument to stress the predominantly altruistic character of Christ's ethics. In one passage the Golden Rule, in another the twofold law of love, is declared to be the principle or source of the whole Old Testament law and prophetic teaching. St. Paul appears to be echoing his Master when he twice asserts that to love one's neighbour as oneself is

to fulfil the whole law. All this is perhaps not quite equivalent to saying that there was nothing in what Jesus had to teach as to the requirements for the higher life that was not so derivable. To seek first God's Kingdom may possibly be regarded as an injunction transcending, if not love to God, at least the love to man which is expressed in the Golden Rule and the second commandment of love. Further, it can hardly be disputed that Our Lord condemned unchastity as intrinsically debasing, and so wrong even if all the parties were willing. It would be perverse so to press the exegesis of the commandment, to do to men what we would they should do to us, as to make it seem consistent with mutual debauchery. But the altruistic value of purity is not far to seek, since sensuality hinders the intimacy of soul with soul, and not till the animal appetites are sublimated into spiritual passion can love attain its fruition. Ultimately whatever Jesus bids us do or refrain from doing is for the welfare of personalities—for the realization of a Divine ideal, in which God's children will attain and develop the good life destined for them by their Heavenly Father.

(4) Our Lord was as idealistic as any of the prophets—indeed, far more so. One might even say, “infinitely more so”. “The Kingdom of God is at hand”; and with that all good things will come. The shifting of emphasis in the Fourth Gospel from the Kingdom of Heaven, as the hope of the world, to eternal life, as the hope of individuals, is no misrepresentation of the mind of Jesus, but rather an explication of one aspect of His thought. The higher righteousness He declared to be necessary for participation in the good that was about to be—both in the glorified humanity on earth and in the heavenly life to which death is a transition. The very indefiniteness of Our Lord's intimation of the glorious future enhances our dream of it, as of a state of being indescribable and incomprehensible by mortal minds. But the perfection of life is realizable only through a perfection of character and act, a perfection that reflects the perfection of God.

CHAPTER II

ETHICS AND ESCHATOLOGY

SOME years ago Dr. Albert Schweitzer startled the theological world with his bold presentation of the eschatological view of Gospel—that the doctrine of the “Last Things”, or “end of the world”, was the dominating factor in the teaching and career of Jesus of Nazareth. In the book *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*, translated under the title *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, he attempted to show how previous interpretations were unsatisfactory and even self-contradictory through failure to appreciate that Jesus confidently expected the end of the world, and therewith the general resurrection and judgment, before the generation to which He spoke had passed away. All the great exegetes and commentators of the Gospels in modern times had, he maintained, gone astray, till Johannes Weiss, who in *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes* (The Preaching by Jesus of the Kingdom of God) set forth the truth—namely, that not only did Jesus believe that the end of the world was soon to come, but that His religious and moral teaching were determined by that belief. Hence the term *Interims-ethik*, the ethic of an interval, implying that He taught a morality suited for preparing men for the coming of a new world in a few years, and therefore unsuited for a continuing human society. The corollary follows that, except for a few occasional sayings and those not the most original, the moral teaching of Jesus has not much to do with us. It cannot, according to this view of it, without considerable wresting and dislocation, be made to yield the principles of the moral transformation and development of the life of man on this planet.

To meet this very serious charge against Our Lord's teaching, which, if substantiated, would go far to invalidate His claim on our obedience and even attention, I have thought well to present it as set forth by Dr. Weiss. I therefore proceed to quote from his book at some length, giving my own translations

of the extracts. He had previously published his views in a still more drastic form, as he implies, and in the present volume is presenting them somewhat modified.

The first edition of this essay was criticized on the ground that it set the ethical message of Jesus in too close a connection with His eschatological preaching. The *Weltanschauung* of Jesus was portrayed too one-sidedly, His estimation of earthly existence was set in the glaring light of the approaching destruction of the world, and so the resulting ethic was too negative, ascetic, world-renouncing. I must to some extent admit this. . . .

It is only natural and psychologically intelligible that the religious excitement whence issued the Judgment preaching of Jesus, should from time to time give way to a gentler mood. The prophetic inspiration comes and goes. Not at every moment is the electric sultriness of the crisis equally oppressive; the tension relaxes, the constraint on His soul of the mighty errand is relieved.

The deep shadows which the approaching Judgment throws before it vanish away, and men and things appear in a kindlier light. The Sun of the Heavenly Father breaks again through the clouds, and testifies with its rays to the love and goodness and mercy of God. Then the once-born joy in Nature and mankind comes again in Him to its right. The lily of the field in its beauty speaks to Him of the never-resting care of the Creator; out of the eye of the child shines into His a ray of the being of God, who loves children; and over His head the stars wander, as they have wandered for æons past. It is then that the thought of the world's destruction recedes, and with all the love and sympathetic interest even in details of which He is capable, He gives Himself up to the affairs of this life, rejoices with the merry and weeps with the mourners. At such seasons He is not the stern and gloomy prophet, but a man among men, a child of God among the children of God. From such a mood sprang those sayings and parables whose freshness will never evaporate, and in which there is little trace of world-weariness and asceticism, of the apprehension of the end of the world and the Judgment. It was at such seasons that He disseminated those maxims, full of the purest and deepest wisdom, which reveal no trace of eschatological excitement, but simply and quietly express what His clear, luminous, God-quickened mind perceived as self-evident. Free from sharp and wounding spikes, they abide calm and beautiful, appearing in their direct and convincing strength to possess an undying validity for humanity of all ages. One can understand how it is that Christian theology, especially since the days of rationalism, when the eschatological Messianic idea was alien to it, has laid even firmer hold of these words of Jesus. In them we see His peculiar significance, the permanent in Jesus.

The happy mood and the sayings that sprang from it were not, in the opinion of Johannes Weiss, eschatological. Nor did denunciation of the Pharisees spring from an eschatological root; nor again did the two commandments enjoining love to God and neighbour, which indeed were not originally from Jesus. What was eschatological in origin and tendency was the preaching of repentance, the call to abjure the service of mammon and surrender earthly wealth, the exhortation to renounce family ties, to love enemies, not to resist evil, and generally to deny oneself and take up the cross. All this Johannes Weiss considers to have been due to Our Lord's association with John the Baptist, from whom He derived the idea of apocalyptic Messianism, though He carried it to greater lengths. All these difficult behests were intended as methods of severance from the present world, so that men should be readier to enter into the new world of the Kingdom of God. The term "righteousness" (δικαιοσύνη) had, Dr. Weiss thinks, a strictly eschatological significance—the righteousness of severance from this world in preparation for the coming world. How far Jesus was from teaching an ethic suitable for life in this world is shown by the absence from His teaching of any commendation of public service as a moral and religious duty.

Once again we remind ourselves that we are not dealing with a legislation for "the moral fellowship of the Kingdom of God". In the Kingdom of God the need for commandments and obedience is no more; for there God's will holds sway in all His children, without the slightest opposition. Jesus announces what He requires of those who will afterwards participate in the Kingdom of God. The new morality which He preaches is conceived of as the condition for entering the Kingdom of God. "Repent; for the Kingdom of God has come very near." "If your righteousness doth not far exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven." So His demands are not derived from an ideal of a perfected human society, nor from universally binding moral standards, but are based on the terrible seriousness of the present moment. The greatest crisis of world-history stands at the door. The most blessed salvation and the most frightful destruction lie concealed in the obscurity of the near future. Once again, at the eleventh hour, to every one is granted the

decision of his eternal destiny. The time is short. Now it behoves us to bethink ourselves of the will of God and to do what is possible to win His favour. The importance of the present demands a final gathering up of all the forces of human personality, a straining of every nerve in a mighty effort.

From such a starting-point we cannot expect a systematic ethical legislation capable of regulating the life of a moral community for centuries ahead in every detail; for the nearness of the end of the world precludes the continuance of such a community. This section of the ethical message of Jesus has a special character, comparable to the special regulations of war-time, which would not be practicable in peace. He makes prodigious, to some extent superhuman, demands—demands which under ordinary circumstances would be simply impossible. . . .

So deeply is the mind of Jesus pervaded with the thought of the destructiveness of riches for the soul, that He does not hesitate to regard them as the special enemy of God. Accordingly we may with full confidence attribute to Him Luke's view that, not merely wrongly gotten wealth, but all wealth is itself a *μαμωνᾶς τῆς ἀδικίας*. That money may conceivably be a means to moral ends, or the basis of moral activity, or an instrument of good and wholesome work in the service of God's humanity—all this lies at this place entirely outside His range of vision. The application of it to almsgiving is only the best and most pious method of getting rid of it. . . .

Among those things which can hinder a man from entering the Kingdom of God Jesus actually reckoned family ties. Hence His harshest and most startling utterances. Even His words to the son who wished to bury his father sound to us hard and almost inhuman. . . .

Yet more general and therefore even harsher are the words of Luke xiv. 26: "If one come to Me and hate not his father and his mother [and his wife] and his brothers and sisters [yea and his own life], he cannot be My disciple."¹ Though people admit that Jesus intended this demand, not only, let us say, for His special messengers, but for all who wished to become His adherents and hoped to be His fellows in the Kingdom, yet they are wont in their exegesis to limit and qualify the thought like this: "In cases where the possessions connected with family life give occasion to sin." But this qualification is entirely absent from the mind of Jesus. The point to remark is that Jesus assumes without question that this condition applies to all the great crowds that went about with Him and were presumably therefore His followers, and forcibly assures them of it. For all of them their

¹ Footnote by Dr. Weiss: "The wife is merely Luke's gloss, cp. Luke xviii. 29. Even the *ἐτι τε καὶ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχὴν* is an epitomizing addition by him."

family life is their undoing. None of them will ever, so long as they remain in ordinary human relationships, be able to acquire the earnestness and the discipline necessary for meeting the Judgment with good courage; and so the demand for separation from kindred applies to them all. The former is even more important than the latter. It is obvious that Jesus did not here declare a permanent moral law for Christendom through all the centuries, or an "ordinance for the Kingdom of God". . . .

How thankful should we be at the present time, if we possessed any strong clear maxims of His exalting or calling attention to the performance of public functions as a service to God, just as money can be applied to moral aims in His service. But it is precisely here that our deficiency lies. His life-task was of a different character. Had not the call on the Jordan swept Him into the Messianic movement, it is possible that, being at heart of a sane and bright disposition, He might have become the Founder of a real "evangelical" ethic, a very serious ethic indeed, yet one of joy in the world. But as it was, His soul—apart from occasional respites—was tuned to another key and wafted away from interests of that sort. . . .

The nature of God in its magnificent exaltation above all that is pettily human cannot be more beautifully portrayed in its rich warm-heartedness than in the words: "He makes His sun to shine over good and evil, over His worshippers and His enemies." There is no greater pattern for men. The way to approach Him is described in this saying: "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, pray for them that ill-treat you." . . .

Such love for enemies is unattainable by the ordinary capacities of man. There must come a special religious upsoaring, an intensification and heightening of all the forces of the soul, as was promised to the disciples for the time of the last persecution. . . . We are to do good to those who hate us, not so much to further their interests, but strictly to show that we ourselves are free from enmity and self-seeking. . . . The preceding injunction—not to resist evil—also has a purely individualistic bearing; and it is not by mere chance that Luke puts this under the command to love enemies. Not a word is said here as to shaming and reforming one's enemy by patiently allowing him to do as he likes. That thought is quite remote. All the emphasis is upon the readiness to suffer wrong. . . . If Jesus had meant His commandment as a moral or legal enactment for the peoples of the coming centuries, it would have been simply intolerable that it has been in fact so little observed by Christendom. But this supposition is obviously quite untenable. He could have had no idea that one day His words would arouse bitter feelings in our Germanic forefathers and furnish our theologians with hard cases of conscience. He could have had no idea that because of these words Christianity would be accused of being cowardly, unmanly, a religion fit for slaves. In any case, their meaning is quite different. As with the commandment

to love enemies, so here there are demanded heroic tests of self-mastery and freedom from worldly interests. To satisfy these tests there is needed, certainly not that brutal masculinity of the blond beast of which Nietzsche prates, but rather the overflowing religious enthusiasm of martyrs, for whom the world and all its goods count for absolutely nought and Heaven counts for everything, and who therewith know that in the Kingdom of God the violent, the revengeful, those who cling to the goods of this world, will find no place.

It needs no great acumen to discern improbabilities and misunderstandings in this unsympathetic, not to say patronizing, interpretation of the message of Jesus. We may notice these four in particular:—

- (1) Even if we pass the improbable hypothesis that the mind of Jesus oscillated between happy world-acceptance and terror-struck world-abhorrence, it is surely inconceivable that these moods should occur together in the same brief discourse, as according to this critic they do when Jesus in the same breath tells of the unfailing care of the Creator for both good and bad and proceeds to adjure men on that account to love their enemies; or again when, in warning men against the seductions of mammon, He holds up birds and flowers for their admiration and imitation.
- (2) To tell people to love their enemies, not for the sake of their enemies but merely or primarily to save their own souls, is to commend an artificial and hypocritical virtue. Elsewhere Our Lord clearly implied that kindness to godless people elicits kindness in return, as when He said, "Give, and it shall be given you". So that to say that the thought of "shaming and reforming one's enemy by patiently allowing him to do as he likes" is "quite remote", is false—if not actually, at least virtually.
- (3) Dr. Weiss is not clear in his own mind what he means by the statement that the ethic of Jesus is one of preparation for the Kingdom of God. He tries to mean by this that this ethic is wholly, or at least mainly, one of world-

renunciation. But the injunction to love enemies, after God's example, naturally means that, so far as we are concerned with our own moral reformation, we should practise beforehand the morality required for the new world in which souls will behave and live similarly to God. To say or imply, as Dr. Weiss does, that it is not necessary to practise the law of the Kingdom of God before it comes, because when it does come "God's will holds sway in all His children", is to ignore the existence of character and the need for the training of character.

- (4) It seems almost a perverse misunderstanding when Dr. Weiss says that Christ told all men—or at least all the crowds that followed Him from place to place—to break their family ties. Did crowds continually follow Him about, and, if so, how did they manage to get food and lodging? Did He wish the whole population of Palestine to become His followers in this literal sense? Did He say that no one could be saved from hell who did not hate his father and mother? Obviously these extreme demands were made of would-be disciples, disciples in the sense of members of His itinerant missionary band, of which the number was necessarily limited. "To be My disciple" was not a condition of "escaping the Gehenna of fire". A little common sense would show that callings of special responsibility require special forms of self-sacrifice. True, without self-sacrifice there can be no ultimate salvation; but the particular form of self-sacrifice required of any particular individual at any particular time is not necessarily that of "hating" father and mother.

But these criticisms hardly dispose of all the difficulties to meet which the theory of interim-ethic was propounded. It remains true that Our Lord's moral teaching appears unsuitable for mankind considered as a complex and developing whole; and that for two main reasons: First, because some of

His precepts appear impracticable, such as "Resist not evil", "Give to him that asketh thee"; secondly, because, as Dr. Weiss pointed out, He apparently offers little or no suggestion as to the social or public application of His ethic. These reflections might incline us to a modification of the interim-ethic theory, according to which the ethic would be, not the ethic of an interval, but the ethic of the future, the endless future of the Kingdom of God, and therefore imperfectly adapted to the brief present. It would not be the ethic which was interim, but the human conditions to which it was not quite suitable. These would change, but the moral principles would abide. The purpose of promulgating them would be, on this view, that they should be practised beforehand, even in unsuitable circumstances, in order that men might have become habituated to them when the conditions for which they were thoroughly appropriate should arrive. We might illustrate this by the analogy of learning a foreign language under difficulties in one's own country in order to speak it later fluently abroad. This theory agrees, far better than that of Johannes Weiss, with the record of the Gospels. Christ bade men love their enemies, not so as to abjure the world, but with a view to becoming like God, and therefore fit for the Kingdom of God. The great summons with which He commences His Ministry, "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand", obviously means this: "Cease to behave in conformity with this present age, which will last only a short while longer, and train your characters in behaviour appropriate to the better age about to be, so as to be able to participate in it."

Even so, it might be argued, some of His precepts would be inapplicable in the Kingdom of God—those of forbearance and forgiveness, of compassionate care for the poor and wretched, of patience and self-sacrifice. But can we be so sure? Might not Our Lord have thought of those inside the Kingdom as making ventures to rescue and draw in the unfortunates left without, since God and His children would not have so changed their characters as to have ceased to love their enemies? In any

case, the main principles would abide; only their application would change with changing circumstances. To practise these principles in one application would prepare souls for practising them later in another.

Some such modified eschatological theory of the Gospel ethic as I have just suggested is put forward by Dr. E. F. Scott, except that he stresses more the transitory nature of the injunctions to pity, patience, and the like:—

When evil had been done away there would be no occasion for the exercise of patience, forgiveness, care for the poor and miserable.

On the other hand, he does emphasize the eternal character of the central principles:—

His precepts, as we have seen, are rather to be regarded as so many illustrations of great principles, which by their very nature are eternally valid. Love, trust, goodness, cannot but be the highest things in the coming age as in this. The man who gives effect to them amidst the cramping circumstances of the present is not contenting himself with a makeshift morality. He is following out, in the face of all difficulties and limitations, the will of God as it must always be.¹

This is well said. Such a view of the Gospel teaching would give us far more encouragement than would the strict interim-ethic theory, in our hopes and schemes of applying it more widely and thoroughly than has ever been done to all the affairs of the world. Still, if we thought that it was never intended by the Teacher to be so applied, would that not in times of difficulty somewhat weaken our zeal and perseverance? But supposing we can regard it, if not as an adequate exposition, yet as the preliminary outline, of a morality that really was meant to transform the world—to constitute the method of the human working in conjunction with the Divine; then, indeed, we shall be heartened to press forward with our plans. Besides, we are not inclined lightly to accept the idea that Our Lord was so mistaken as to expect a sudden substitution of this earthly by a heavenly world, with so little of human co-operation.

I am prepared to maintain that Our Lord did, at least at one

¹ *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus*, p. 43.

stage of His career, have in view a more constructive ethic for the life of mankind, but that circumstances led Him, not necessarily to abandon, but to defer this, and meanwhile to develop and emphasize other aspects of His message. And here let it be observed that it is not only ethically or morally that His teaching was incomplete, but religiously and probably theologically also. For He surely could not have been content that the worship of His Church should consist only in one brief prayer, and it is at least supposable that He had more to tell men about the nature of God and the life of the soul after death.

There is considerable evidence that Jesus had much more instruction of a practical nature to give the world, but He curtailed His message because of the poor response which it met with. For instance, in the synagogue at Nazareth He reads a passage from the Old Testament foretelling a more righteous and happier condition of mankind, and indicates that this is at hand if mankind will receive it, but He causes grievous offence among His audience by the suggestion that Jews and Gentiles will participate on equal terms in the promised blessings. Then again there are numerous sayings of His which imply that He was disappointed and grieved because of the neglect of people to do what He bade them, of which these may serve as examples:—

- (1) His quotation of the bitter and ironical words of Isaiah's inaugural vision: "That seeing they may see and not perceive; and hearing they may hear and not understand, lest haply they should turn again and it should be forgiven them."
- (2) His irritation at people's readiness to worship Him without obeying Him: "Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?"
- (3) His denunciation of the cities of Galilee: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! . . . And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto Heaven? Thou shalt be brought down to Hades."

- (4) His allusion, in the parables of the Great Supper and the Royal Marriage Feast, to His nation's rejection of the welfare offered through Him.
- (5) His laments over Jerusalem: "If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day the things which belong unto thy peace!" "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

All this goes to show that Jesus had more to teach in the way of both religion and morality, and may be used to counter the argument that, because He omitted to point out the sociological consequences of His injunctions, He never intended them for a continuing society. On the contrary, He did on one occasion at least indicate that His Gospel had a wide application to national and international life, and He frequently lamented that people were remiss in putting His moral principles into effect. That He did not constantly and clearly insist on their social bearings is readily explicable. Those who refused to learn individual charity could not be safely entrusted with the wider implications of the brotherhood of man, such as the emancipation of slaves and the fairer distribution of wealth and the abolition of militarism and imperialism. Still more, to have associated these projects with His claim to be the Messiah would have been to invite revolution with all its terrible accompaniments and consequences. Till mankind had appropriated more of His gentle and forbearing spirit He could express His ideals only in general terms.

In the parable of the Sower He indicated some of the moral defects—indifference, shallowness, worldliness—which prevented ordinary folk from accepting the Gospel in such wise as to perform really valuable services to their fellows. People listened to what He told them, but for one cause or another did not bring forth the fruit of good deeds whereby human society would have been regenerated. But the trouble with the

religious leaders—the most eager and conscientious of them, the Pharisees—was rather that they were imbued with an egoism which perverted their best thoughts and efforts, and was extremely difficult to eradicate, being fenced about with an elaborate system of make-believe. The Sadducean hierarchy, on the other hand, was in the main too cynical and sceptical to be worth appealing to. The existence of nationalistic ideas, in the Zealots, made the situation even more unfavourable for any far-reaching programme of moral reform. It is easy to understand why Jesus had to leave the statement of His ethic so brief and lacking in particularity. It was not for the eschatological reason that the world was about to be destroyed; it was rather that the world refused to pay heed.

But did this curtailment imply the abandonment of His complete programme of the moral education of mankind, or only its postponement till more favourable conditions should arrive? Are the upholders of the interim-ethic theory so far right that Jesus, despairing of reforming the world, came instead to look for a Divine judgment by means of which the righteous should be selected out of the world for a heavenly life, and the remainder destroyed or punished or perhaps left in their wickedness? I do not think we need feel impelled to any such interpretation of the mind of our Master. But let us consider carefully what, besides preaching, He believed Himself constrained to do for the preparation of human souls for the blessed life of the Kingdom of God.

We read that on one occasion He gave utterance to the feeling of tension which afflicted Him: "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it is accomplished!" The word translated "straitened" may signify either "distressed", or else "restricted", "hampered". It is, in any case, obvious that He was thinking of the sacrificial death without which He could not accomplish His Messianic task. By what process Jesus reached the dread conclusion that He must die in shame and agony in order to fulfil His mission, we can only conjecture. The definitely Messianic prophecies

of the Old Testament gave no hint of such an extraordinary notion, though the idea of atonement through sacrifice pervaded Hebrew religion. We must suppose that it was the description of the "Suffering Servant" in Deutero-Isaiah that, more than any other passage in the sacred Scriptures of His nation, seemed to point to the necessity of the Christ dying for the world. The pathetic and moving cadences of that wonderful poem must have haunted his mind, attuning it to receive a direct Divine revelation calling on Him to suffer and die. Certainly He became convinced that teaching and example and personal magnetism by themselves were not adequate to win humanity and make it fit for the Kingdom of God. Was, then, the Cross a substitute for the Sermon on the Mount? Surely not. Unless men learnt to love as their Heavenly Father loved, they could not attain the perfection requisite for life in the Kingdom of God. It was in order to enable and induce men to love God and their fellow-men that He had to undergo a terrible death. The Sermon on the Mount had to be put into effect through the power of the Cross.

What, then, of the undelivered moral message which He longed to publish abroad, the completion of the ethics essential to prepare mankind for the ideal life? Instead of proceeding with His moral and religious instruction He courted the death by which He could gain the power to deliver and guide and influence the erring and helpless race of men. But was this instruction never to be continued? The answer is given in the words attributed to Him in the Fourth Gospel: "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all the truth." Those truths which Jesus had yearned to declare, but felt Himself unable to, His adherents would learn by means of inspiration after His death. From some passages in the Synoptic Gospels we might gather that Jesus thought of Himself as personally instructing His disciples in time to come: namely, when He declared that where two or three should be gathered together in His Name He would be in the midst

of them; and when He promised that He would be with them even unto the consummation of the age. From the above passage in St. John, and also from His mention of the Spirit of God as inspiring the disciples when undergoing trials before rulers, we might rather suppose that He thought of His Heavenly Father speaking to them through the Holy Spirit. But however we understand Jesus on this mysterious subject, He certainly promised that communication from God to man would continue, and this would, we can hardly doubt, include moral instruction and guidance. We may conclude that Jesus believed that the Divine ethics in which He gave the first lessons in the Sermon on the Mount would be resumed when He had by His death made it possible for men to put it into practice.

But would this be all that the Christ would have to do? Would He never appear as the Prince of Peace and universal Monarch, according to the Isaianic prophecies? Surely some day the Redemption would culminate in the open and acknowledged supremacy of the Redeemer.

Certain Jewish books of an imaginative and speculative order, named "apocalypses" (that is, "revelations"), written and compiled during the centuries following on the close of the Hebrew canon, suggested an answer. In the Book of Enoch, in particular, occurs the prediction of the coming from Heaven of a heavenly being, "the Son of Man", to judge and rule the world and to inaugurate an age of heavenly blessedness:—

At that hour that Son of Man was named
In the presence of the Lord of Spirits,
And his name before the Head of Days.
Yea, before the sun and signs were created,
Before the stars of the heaven were made,
His name was named before the Lord of Spirits.
He shall be a staff to the righteous whereon to stay themselves
and not fall;
And he shall be the light of the Gentiles,
And the hope of those that are troubled of heart.¹

¹ *The Book of Enoch*, XLVIII, translated by Canon R. H. Charles.

This, and more in the same strain, may have seemed to adumbrate, however metaphorically, the conclusion of the Messiah's work—a visible triumphant subjugation of the physical world in which men live. In some such way was the Suffering Servant to become "the Prince of Peace, of the increase of whose government and peace there should be no end". Since He was to be removed into the supernatural world by death, He must supernaturally come back, endued with heavenly majesty and might.

While eschatology may not have been entirely absent from the earlier teaching of Jesus, it became far more pronounced and elaborate towards the close. We remark these three phases in the thought and teaching of Jesus, which we may denote by the terms "didactic" or "prophetic", "redemptive", "apocalyptic" or "eschatological". As the didactic led on to the redemptive, so did the redemptive lead on the eschatological. We might almost say that the mind of Jesus traversed in a few years or months approximately the same course as the inspired leaders of His nation had during centuries, except that with the latter the idea of a suffering redeemer seems to have been at the most a passing intuition, and that He welded them together probably far more than they had into a consistent whole.

The second phase did not contradict or supersede the first, nor the third the second and the first—at least, not in Our Lord's thought. The Cross did in nowise annul the commandments of love to God and man as preparations for the Kingdom of God (for He emphasized them in the course of His final visit to Jerusalem); it rather expressed certain extreme consequences of them. Nor did the prediction of the Second Advent make either the Cross or the Sermon on the Mount of none effect; it rather pointed to their far-reaching significance and fulfilment.

Precisely what Our Lord understood by His predictions of the shaking of the powers of heaven, the coming of the Son of Man on the clouds with great power and glory, and the gathering together of the elect from the four winds, all apparently

before the existing generation had ceased to be; how far He spoke symbolically; how far, indeed, He was correctly remembered and reported: all this constitutes one of the gravest problems of New Testament exegesis, far too complicated to be discussed here. But I submit that His eschatology, whatever it exactly was, did not in His mind invalidate His ethic, just as it evidently did not invalidate His belief in the ransom of mankind from evil by His death. Our survey of the phases of His teaching should rather afford us insight into the place which His moral doctrine occupied in His complete Gospel, and which it should occupy in Christian thought to-day. The Golden Rule, as has been said, is not the centre of the Gospel, inasmuch as Jesus did not think of God's great ideal for the race of men as being realized solely, or mainly, by human efforts. On the other hand, the Golden Rule—and, we may add with some confidence, all that logically flows from it in the way of human fellowship and evolution—is an essential and indispensable constituent of the Gospel, since unless we do unto others as we would that they should do to us there can be no Kingdom of Heaven for us in this life or beyond. The moral ideal of Jesus, together with the simple religion which He based on the conception of God our Father, is by no means a subsidiary by-product of Christianity, but something without which God's purpose for humanity would fail. For it represents what man has to do in conjunction with what God offers to do and will do towards the realization of the *summum bonum* of the Universe.

It is not, I think, very profitable to conjecture how Christianity would have grown, had the Jews given that hearty response to the Gospel which Jesus looked for; if they had not merely said unto Him "Lord! Lord", but really set themselves in good earnest to do the things that He bade them. Surely even that would not have removed the necessity for some sacrificial Atonement, or for the impact of Heaven on earth symbolized by apocalyptic imaginings. It has been maintained that the very generality of Christ's moral doctrine has been an advantage,

since if it had been worked out in detail to suit the circumstances of the time, it would *ipso facto* have been less appropriate to the conditions of subsequent ages. Yet we cannot think that it would have been beyond His power to render distinct the essential from the accidental in any moral precepts which He deemed it advisable to set forth. Again, the incompleteness of the verbal message of command may well be deemed a blessing in so far as it has required to be supplemented by further messages through inspiration and the free use of human intelligence and reliance on conscience, activities of a higher order than mere unquestioning obedience. But it is unthinkable that methods of fostering these activities would not have been given, even if the whole world had shown itself eager to carry Christ's precepts into practice in every conceivable respect. Indeed, the ultimate relation between eschatology and ethics is not conditioned by any accidental deviation by humanity from the path which God has appointed for it to tread, but consists in the infinite importance of righteousness in the spiritual order, as that without which the best can never be.

It remains to outline our conclusions on the whole problem of the relations of the moral teaching of Jesus to other parts or aspects of His message. The inadequacy of His moral teaching for human society, which was the most substantial ground for the interim-ethic theory, was really due to a postponement. This postponement was necessitated by the fact that, as it appeared to Him, the full ethic of the Kingdom of God could be neither profitably nor even safely disclosed until He had by a sacrificial death provided that closer contact between God and men whereby they would receive more power both to understand and to carry out that ethic. Further revelation of the same would be given when He had through death attained to an exalted state in Heaven. This revelation His adherents would be more capable of receiving if they had remembered and laid to heart the brief preparatory outline which He had been able to give them when on earth in the flesh.

What, then, was the relation of the ethics of Jesus to His eschatology? It appears to have been twofold. In the first place, we may gather that the moral regeneration and development which as Prophet He had inaugurated, and, as Christ, crucified and risen and exalted, expected to continue, He thought of as being brought to completion by Himself as triumphant "Son of Man", when He returned in glory to rule the world. In that capacity He would check and punish wrongdoing and encourage and promote righteousness, by the exercise of supernatural might.

In the second place, the moral and religious reform and development for which He called, and to effect which He went to His death, Jesus believed to be preparatory to some wonderful transformation of human life. The apocalyptists had already attempted to depict a glorified world; but Jesus must have conceived the glorification, as they could not do, in terms of love and spirit. For those who refused to repent there would perhaps for a season be a less endurable existence than hitherto had been the lot of sinners. For whereas in a generally sinful world those who broke the laws of God could exist, yet in the same world remodelled they could find no place; besides which, more drastic methods would be adopted for their correction. Meanwhile the righteous and faithful would enter into the spiritual life for which their conduct and worship had qualified them.

To the Early Christians their eschatology meant much for their ethics. For the expectation of the consummation of the age with the universal Judgment of mankind made the rewards of goodness appear both imminent and exceedingly great. As St. Paul put it to the Athenians: "The times of ignorance God overlooked; but now He commandeth men that they should everywhere repent: inasmuch as He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world justly by the man whom He hath ordained." The hope of a speedy deliverance from the hostility of a wicked world, and therewith an indescribably glorious reward, undoubtedly encouraged the

Christians of the first century to face and endure persecution. And yet in a literal sense the hope was illusory. Their Saviour did not return in glory. The horrors of the conquest of Judæa were followed by more than two centuries of intermittent persecution. Even now, after the lapse of nineteen hundred years, mankind, good and bad together, continues to be wracked and tortured.

Yet it was a true encouragement that Jesus' gave to His disciples: "He that endureth to the end the same shall be saved." "In your patience ye shall win your souls." For the promised salvation and bliss lay for them, we may be confident, the other side of death, where they found a fuller realization of the Kingdom of God than had the good men of the past when they died. For Jesus did go "to prepare a place" for them, and there were "many mansions" awaiting them in the heavenly regions.

This by itself, however, is no adequate fulfilment of our hopes. If we are true followers of the Son of Man we must desire, even more than our personal deliverance and glorification, the deliverance and glorification of humanity. And we may be sure that as men more and more put into practice the ethics of Jesus, so will His eschatological predictions more speedily be realized.

Nor need we be cast down by the disturbances, and even disasters, that occur from time to time on the wide field of history, seeing that the disintegration of worldly civilization may facilitate the growth of God's Kingdom and pave the way for a fuller manifestation of Christ in an age to come. And this, I suggest, is the true meaning of the heartening words attributed to Him by St. Luke: "When these things begin to come to pass, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draweth nigh."

CHAPTER III

THE SOCIAL ASPECT

THE apparent absence from Our Lord's moral teaching of any indication that it was to be applied socially has been to many a serious rock of offence. For occasional acts of mercy and a general disposition of good will and humility are obviously not enough in themselves. Man, as has been often insisted, is a social being, and therefore the morality suited to him must be social—not merely in the sense that it must concern his relations to his fellows, but that it must express itself in co-operative and co-ordinated activities directed towards the maintenance and improvement of the common conditions of human life. Indeed, the obligation to the most elaborate social service is virtually contained in the parable of the Good Samaritan.¹ Social service is the doing by many to many, continuously and co-operatively, what one man did to one man once when an unforeseen opportunity offered. But did Our Lord explicitly enjoin or contemplate this more systematic and intelligent, and therefore more effective, charity? One explanation that has been advanced for His not doing so is that based upon eschatology, the answer of the interim-ethic theory, which we have just discussed—namely, that as He expected the end of the world in a few years, He did not think it worth while starting schemes of social service. But the view to which we were led is that Our Lord cut short the exposition of His moral ideals, in the belief that after His sacrificial death He would resume His teaching by means of inspiration. Accordingly the social bearings of the Gospel were not ignored by Jesus, but postponed. The lack of response by the majority of His countrymen to His message, coupled with the political circumstances of the age, necessitated this.

But can we support this theory by reference to passages in the Bible indicating any sort of practical social ethics? My

¹ Vide *The Ethics of the Gospel*, p. 190.

thesis is that we can; that the Old Testament, more especially the prophetic literature, manifests a notable strain of social doctrine, which as One who thought of Himself as fulfilling the law and the prophets Jesus would naturally endorse and develop; also that there is evidence in the Gospel record that He did endorse and develop the social ethics of the prophets in their main features.

Some years ago Professor Walter Rauschenbusch, in his *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, emphasized the strongly social trend of Hebrew prophecy, as the following extracts will show:—

The prophets were not religious individualists. During the classical times of prophetism they always dealt with Israel and Judah as organic totalities. They conceived of their people as a gigantic personality which sinned as one and ought to repent as one. When they speak of their nation as a virgin, as a city, as a vine, they are attempting by these figures of speech to express this organic and corporate social life. In this respect they anticipated a modern conception which now underlies our scientific comprehension of social development and on which modern historical studies are based. . . . The prophets were public men and their interest was in public affairs. Some of them were statesmen of the highest type. All of them interpreted past history, shaped present history, and foretold future history on the basis of the conviction that God rules with righteousness in the affairs of nations, and that only what is just, and not what is expedient and profitable, shall endure.

For instance,

the insight of Isaiah into the international situation of his day saved his people for a long time from being embroiled in the destructive upheavals that buried other peoples, and gave it thirty years of peace amid almost universal war.

Again,

the sufferings of Jeremiah came upon him chiefly because he took the unpopular side in national politics. If he and others had confined themselves to "religion", they could have said what they liked.¹

We may express this briefly by saying that to the prophets of Israel the moral unit was the nation, rather than the individual

¹ *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, pp. 8, 9.

man or woman. Thus Amos: "Hear this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up out of the land of Egypt." Similarly Hosea: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." But a part of the nation might also be personified in this way; for Hosea proceeds to address himself to the Northern Kingdom, calling it by the name of its principal tribe: "I taught Ephraim to walk. . . . How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? . . . Ephraim compasseth Me about with falsehood. . . . Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?" Isaiah likewise speaks, now of Israel as a whole, now of Judah, again of Jerusalem, as single moral personalities, exposing their sin, calling them to repentance, warning them of punishment, foretelling their eventual regeneration. Not till the national life was breaking up did there arise prophets—Jeremiah and Ezekiel—who asserted the independent moral responsibility of the individual, though these prophets continued to use the language of the corporate responsibility of the nation.¹

Even when the sins denounced are not chargeable to the nation as a whole, they are usually those of social classes, large or small—of the "princes", of the rich, of the ladies. And these sins are frequently represented, explicitly or implicitly, as detrimental to the national life in general, as when Isaiah castigates the big landowners for expropriating the peasant-proprietors, or the politicians for the drunkenness which renders them too fuddled to cope with an international crisis.² Sometimes the wrongdoings consist in definite perversion of civil function for selfish ends, as when Isaiah accuses the judges of taking bribes, and Jeremiah cries, "The prophets prophecy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means", and Ezekiel inveighs against the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves instead of the flock. This really implies that, at any rate for certain classes or men with official positions, public service is regarded as a moral obligation. It is only a step from this to

¹ Jer. xxxi. 29, 30; Ezek. xviii.

² Isa. v. 8-13.

say that any useful work—of cultivator, or craftsman, or merchant—may also be regarded as a responsibility to God and man.

Moreover, the Old Testament conception of righteousness was very largely based on the relation of conduct to general well-being, this conduct being regulated by sundry enactments, such as the following: Every year the fields were to lie fallow and their produce was to belong to all. The poor had gleaning rights after every harvest. The labourer was to be paid at sundown. The Sabbath gave a weekly rest to labourers; even to slaves, immigrants, and beasts of burden. Interest on debts was forbidden. The year of Jubilee provided for a periodic emancipation of slaves and redistribution of land. And as the prophetic conceptions of sin and righteousness are predominantly social and national, so also is the prosperity that is promised as the reward of righteousness. Dr. L. B. Paton puts this well: "The social ideals of the prophets are shown not merely by their direct teaching, but also by their pictures of the good time coming. After the blow has fallen, the remnant that is left shall repent; then the nation shall be restored under the rule of a righteous king."¹

Professor Rauschenbusch summarizes the significance of the Hebrew prophets in these words:—

Here then we have a succession of men perhaps unique in religious history for their moral heroism and spiritual insight. They were the moving spirits in the religious progress of their nation; the creators, directly or indirectly, of its law, its historical and poetical literature, and its piety; the men to whose personality and teaching Jesus felt most kinship; the men who still kindle modern religious enthusiasm. Most of us believe that their insight was Divinely given and that the course they steered was set for them by the Captain of history. . . .

We have seen that their religious concern was not restricted to private religion and morality, but dealt pre-eminently with the social and political life of their nation. . . .

We have seen that their sympathy was wholly and passionately with the poor and oppressed. . . .

We have seen that they gradually rose above the kindred prophets

¹ *The Evolution of Ethics*, edited by E. H. Sneath, p. 220.

of other nations through their moral interest in national affairs, and that their spiritual progress and education were intimately connected with their open-eyed comprehension of the larger questions of contemporary history.¹

But there is not a little to add to this, namely, the cosmopolitan and world-wide ideals that are integral to the Hebrew religion at its height. First, there is the promise to Abraham, that in him "shall the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xii. 3), a passage assigned to the oldest, or Yahwistic, source of the Pentateuch. The books of Isaiah and Micah both contain the vision of universal peace, when the nations shall have their differences settled by the voice of the Lord in Jerusalem, so that "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more". Isaiah tells us of the "Prince of Peace, of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end".² To this we may add the prophet's blessing on the great foes of the Chosen People: "In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth: for that the Lord of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance" (xix. 24, 25). Deutero-Isaiah represents the Lord as calling Israel "a light of the Gentiles" (xlii. 6), "a light to the Gentiles. . . . My salvation unto the end of the earth" (xlix. 6). Zechariah gives us this sublime Messianic passage: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold thy king cometh unto thee: he is just and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle-bow shall be cut off; and he shall speak peace unto the nations: and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River unto the ends of the earth" (ix. 9, 10).

¹ *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, p. 41.

² Dr. Buchanan Gray with other commentators doubts whether these passages are really Isaiah's. But the point is not important for the present purpose.

This and much besides in the Old Testament would encourage the visionary hope of a reformed Israel, under the rule of a great Heaven-sent Monarch, proceeding to convert the whole of mankind to the true religion, and binding all nations into one great fellowship of friendship and mutual aid. The Messiah would regenerate the Chosen Race, which would then, under His guidance, win all the rest of the peoples of the world, till they should become one family acknowledging one Father in Heaven and the brotherhood of all m^{én}. Such were the ideas and ideals—social, humanitarian, cosmopolitan—of the great representatives of Hebraism. Is it not probable that Our Lord, in some shape, also embraced them?

Before we attempt definitely to answer this question, it may be well to analyse and distinguish the various meanings of the word "social" as it may be applied to ethics or morality, with special reference to the moral ideas of the Hebrew prophets. These meanings fall into two main categories, which we may denote by the terms "subjective" and "objective", as characterizing the agent or the object of the action respectively. On the one hand, a number of individuals may be so united as to think and feel and act as one man, to such a degree that a detached observer can fittingly judge and address them as a single moral personality. Yet each of these individuals may be concerned mainly with the interests of himself and his kindred. On the other hand, men may act in comparative independence of one another with a view to the good of the society to which they belong or to that of certain groups of it. They will then be concerned with special aspects of the common conditions of the life of a number of people (their nourishment, or health, or security, or education), rather than with any particular individuals in their concrete existences.

Of these two kinds of sociality it is the former which is implied when the prophets speak of "their nation as a virgin, as a city, as a vine", conceiving of it as "a gigantic personality which sinned as one and ought to repent as one". This belongs to a somewhat primitive stage of human development; one

might almost say "pre-human", seeing that a like gregariousness is characteristic of many species of animals and birds. The tendency among human beings to form groups by unintentional and virtually unconscious mutual influence and excitement, so that any such group behaves in an analogous manner to an individual, has been investigated by modern psychologists, by Professor McDougall, for instance, who has given the results of his study in *The Group Mind*. The ethics appropriate to mankind before the development of the sense of individual responsibility will regard the tribe or nation as the moral unit. So we may consider the Hebrew prophets as psychologically correct in making the nation rather than the individual the object of their moral appeals and denunciations. With the emergence of the sense of self-hood or individuality in the period of national decline and disintegration before and during the Babylonian captivity, the prophets, as the moralists of Israel, began to pay more attention to individual responsibility: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Yet this growing moral individualism does not and should not destroy or even diminish the sense of corporate responsibility.

It is noteworthy that Our Lord did so think of His nation and of parts of His nation as in certain aspects moral units. He personified Jerusalem and the cities of Galilee. In the parables of the Great Supper and the Marriage Feast He referred to the rejection by the Jews of the invitation to a better national life which was offered them in the Gospel. This interpretation is borne out by the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, when He said that the Kingdom of God should be taken from the Jews, "and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof". As events turned out, it was rather a cosmopolitan society than a nation which inherited the holy privilege of being God's society, ministering to the spiritual needs of mankind.

But this "subjective" socially moral outlook naturally encourages an "objective" socially moral outlook. In primitive communities the criterion of conduct is mainly its supposed

effect for good or ill on the community. Indeed, some ethical thinkers, notably Paulsen,¹ have attributed the origin of conscience to the approval or disapproval by the tribe of the acts of its members as beneficial or otherwise to it in its corporate existence. This social criterion becomes more pronounced in respect of persons holding official positions, as when Isaiah condemns the landowners for victimizing the peasant-proprietors, the careless and dissolute statesmen for incompetent management of foreign affairs, the judges for corrupt administration of justice. Similarly, Our Lord attacks the Scribes and Pharisees for misleading the people as to their religious interests: "Ye shut the Kingdom of Heaven against men; for ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to enter." In place of the religious teachers and priests of the Jewish nation, He appointed His Apostles to instruct and lead men in the way of salvation. He gave His disciples the social responsibility of ministering to the world in the matter of religion, with no little right of independent judgment, as is shown by His words to Peter: "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." This social duty in the sphere of religion became, in Apostolic times, split into several distinguishable functions, as St. Paul points out: "God has set people within the Church to be first of all apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, and speakers in tongues of various kinds" (1 Cor. xii. 28—Moffatt). Some of these offices appear to be for other than strictly religious needs. In the Acts of the Apostles we read that seven men of good report were appointed to manage the charity of the Christian brotherhood. It is but a step from this to treat all useful work as moral activity of a social character. St. Paul comes near this point of view in the well-known dictum: "If a man will not work, neither let him eat." It is not unreasonable to think that Our Lord may have had in mind this sort of application of His law of love.

But "social" morality means something even more—namely,

¹ *System of Ethics* (English translation), pp. 343 ff.

the co-operation of groups of men, not only for the maintenance and occasional remedying of social conditions, but for the radical improvement and progressive development of human life in all vital respects, a comprehensive aim that might well be denoted by St. Paul's phrase, "for the upbuilding of the body of Christ". For does not the body of Christ include the whole of human nature, physical and mental, as well as moral and spiritual? Under the term "social ideals" we think of the abolition of widespread ills, such as extreme poverty, unhealthy conditions, and prevalent vices, and also the provision of facilities for a happy and many-sided life for all who are capable of profiting by them. Can we discover in the Gospel any hint of such a hope and plan?

I maintain that Our Lord did endorse a visionary social idealism when in the synagogue of Nazareth He quoted Tristo-Isaiah concerning the good time coming and significantly added: "To-day has this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." The Gospel of the Kingdom of God, He implies, holds out the prospect of the abolition of slavery, the extermination of diseases such as blindness, the ending of oppression—in fact, the happy humanity which has been God's purpose since its beginning. Certainly the details of the Utopia are scanty and even vague; but Jesus took the passage of Scripture best suited to His subject—the social regeneration of humanity. His audience is delighted, though a little incredulous; but becomes enraged when He intimates that all nations are to be on an equality. In this respect He definitely departed from and corrected the prophetic ideas. For the passage which He quotes continues with a prediction of the Gentiles becoming servants of the Israelites: "Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and aliens shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers." The prophet flatters the vanity of the Chosen People by depicting them as a religious *élite*, overlords battenning on the riches of the once heathen world: "But ye shall be named the priests of the Lord: men shall call you ministers of our God: ye shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their glory shall

ye boast yourselves." All such megalomaniac expectations Our Lord quietly brushes aside by reminding His hearers that Elijah and Elisha helped Gentiles as well as, if not in preference to, their own countrymen, thus signifying that there were to be no privileged peoples in the new and better world which He came to inaugurate.

Is it then conceivable that Jesus did not in His own mind include in His conception of God's offer the ending of war and the fraternity of all nations and the diversion of military energies to the increase of wealth, as is so entrancingly described in the books of Isaiah and Micah? The fact that later He foretold that the Gospel would produce strife and bloodshed, and for a considerable time there would be wars and rumours of wars as well as other woes, does not contradict the supposition that at the time of His sermon at Nazareth He did look forward to a fulfilment of the prophetic ideal of universal peace. And even at the end of His Ministry, when after telling the parable of the Wicked Husbandman He declared that the Kingdom of God should be taken away from the Jews and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof, would He not naturally be understood to mean by this the mission formerly assigned to the Israelites of leading the other nations in the ways of peace and good will? The wars and other horrors would not last for ever; for the Son of Man would come and right all the wrongs upon the face of the earth. It is by no means evident from the Gospel narrative that this signified the transference of the whole of mankind to supernatural conditions in which nations would no longer exist.

Again, when He rode into Jerusalem, "meek and sitting upon an ass", we can hardly doubt that the Messianic passage of the prophet Zechariah (quoted above), to which St. Matthew refers, was in His thoughts—the prophecy of the Heaven-sent Monarch, who, riding, not on the war-horse but on the peaceful ass, should cause the Chosen People to disarm and invite all other nations to renounce war.

Was it then as a forlorn hope that Jesus made on this occasion

a symbolic offer of universal peace, the peace that, starting with the Jews, would spread over all the earth? It must have been a forlorn hope indeed, since shortly before He had been lamenting that Jerusalem did not know "the things which belonged unto her peace", and was heading for that mad revolt against Rome which would cause her "enemies to cast a trench about her and lay her even with the ground". Or was He not rather looking beyond to the time when His offer of peace would be at last accepted, hoping that this symbolic act would be remembered and recorded and become a familiar incident of history, till at last its significance should be grasped and the governments of the world should respond and accept?

The Divine plan for the Redemption of the world—in other words, the establishment of the Kingdom of God—evidently involved the training of a particular nation in religion and morality, in order that this nation might subsequently influence other nations and draw them to God. This moral training was to be both individual and social. Only a righteous nation, righteous as a social organism, could be the agent of the Divine purpose. Hence the insistence by the Prophets of Israel on social righteousness, including mutual service and harmony between the sections and members of the community; hence also Our Lord's reiteration of the prophetic social idealism in His discourse in the synagogue at Nazareth and implicitly at other times.

But the elect nation rejected His appeal, and its place was taken by an elect society—the Assembly or Church of Christ. To this would naturally fall the obligation of developing and living with the social righteousness inculcated of old. And the little Christian community in Jerusalem was not remiss in doing so, as the author of the Acts relates. But the fact that the Church consisted at first of only a few in each nation made it impracticable for it to develop a concrete social goodness embracing all the affairs of human life. It could hardly manifest the moral ideal in industry and commerce; it was impossible for

it to do so in political matters. Hence the Church tended to become more and more a merely religious society, a corporation concerned only with making men individually right with God; this tendency being encouraged by the prevalent belief in the imminent end of the world and the inadequate conception of immortality corresponding to it.¹ The denationalizing of the society entrusted with the function of bringing mankind into the Kingdom of God had perhaps some advantage in cutting at the roots of national pride in religious matters; but it had also the disadvantage of divorcing salvation from the moralization of the conditions and activities of human society in all their concrete complexity. But as we survey Our Lord's teaching as a whole, it is hard to resist the impression that He thought of the establishment of God's Kingdom in this visible world as one aspect, and the salvation and raising to eternal life of individual souls as another aspect, of one great ideal which it is the will of God in His infinite love to realize in increasing perfection.

But in this present age the social implications of the Gospel, the full statement of which Our Lord for certain reasons apparently did not make, are being rediscovered. Not to one elect nation, but to all nations, comes the call to realize God's social ideal for the world—of justice and service and tender care for human life, of peace and co-operation between all nations and groups and sections. And we have to aid us in this endeavour both practical science, rendering us more competent to deal with the several departments of human life and its environment, and also the scientific theory of evolution, of growth and progress, which agrees with the revelation of the Spirit that God has prepared something far better for us and for all His creatures. It is only when Christianity is brought into close relation with evolving humanity in all its intricate many-sidedness that it may be rightly deemed as in any way a complete fulfilment of the Gospel preached in Galilee.

¹ In the early centuries of its existence the Church did effect something in the reformation of social morality. See Bishop Gore's *Christ and Society*, Lecture III, "The Early Church", especially pp. 77-89.

APPENDIX

SOCIAL SERVICE UNDER JUDAISM

THAT the notion of a social application of the Law and the Prophets was not altogether strange to the generation to which Our Lord spoke, is evidenced by the records of social service in the Jewish communities about two centuries later, when the national life was reconstituting itself after two successive revolutions against Rome and humiliating defeats. To quote Professor Moore, writing on the evidence of the Talmud, concerning the Jews in Sepphoris and elsewhere:—

“In various connections it has already appeared that the relief of the poor was not left wholly to the benevolence of individuals; the community assumed its obligation to care for those permanently or temporarily in need. . . . In each municipality two collectors were appointed, men of unimpeachable probity whose character warranted leaving the whole business in their hands without any accounting. They made their rounds together every Friday to the market and the shops and the private houses, taking up the weekly collection for charity in money or in kind. . . . Their duties were responsible and difficult. . . . They had to investigate the various needs and sometimes competing claims of the recipients.

“Upon the community fell also the support of orphan children, and the seeing of them married and launched in life. . . .

“Besides the collection for this community chest, there was a daily collection of victuals from house to house. . . . This was received and distributed by a committee of three to such as were in pressing need of food for the coming day. . . .

“Public as well as private charity has always had its chapter of impostors, and the Jews were no exception. Their rule was that if a man pleaded hunger he should be fed without further question, but if an unknown beggar asked for clothing the case should be investigated. There were mendicants who made themselves out to be blind, or gave themselves wounds on their legs, or simulated a dropsical swelling of the belly; and they are warned that before they die they will suffer in reality from the infirmities they now pretend. Similarly, one who takes alms which he does not need will come to genuine poverty before he ends.”

Another remarkable feature of Jewish life at this period is the sense of the obligation of labour and its dignity. To continue from the same author: “Men should make every effort not to become a public charge. Rather make your Sabbath a weekday (by forgoing the sabbatical luxury), than become a public charge. A pointed application of this principle is made by Rab: ‘Skin the carcass of a dead beast in the

market-place for hire, and do not say, I am a great man, it is beneath my dignity.' Earn your own living even by the most repugnant employment.

"Many of the most eminent scholars, as is well known, supported themselves and their families by manual labour, some of them by unskilled labour. Every father was enjoined to teach his son a trade, not only because it secured him a livelihood, but because of the moral influence of labour. . . . The dignity and blessings of labour are a frequent theme in the literature of all periods."¹

Careful and systematic charity, the support of destitute children, emphasis on the moral dignity of work—all this may be regarded as the practical outcome of the social doctrine of the great prophets and probably was in vogue to some extent even in the time of Our Lord's Ministry.

¹ G. F. Moore, *Judaism*, vol. ii, pp. 174-178. Another interesting characteristic of Judaism at this period was the public support of the study of Jewish literature. Vide A. Büchler's *The Political and Social Leaders of the Jewish Community of Sepphoris*, chap. v.

CHAPTER IV

CHRIST'S ATTITUDE TO THE LAW

ACCORDING to St. Matthew, Jesus described His attitude to the Torah (the Hebrew Law) in these words: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all things be fulfilled." This passage comprises two statements: (1) that Jesus purposed to fulfil, or complete, the Law, in whole or in part; (2) that every detail of the Law would be retained "till all things be fulfilled". We will consider these separately.

I

"Fulfilment" here obviously means "expansion", but expansion in the sense of a fuller statement of the principles which were inadequately expressed in the ancient commandments. So Dr. A. Boyd Scott: "Completion means the culmination of a plan and motive inherent in it from the first. It is in such a sense that Jesus must be regarded as fulfilling the Law."¹ In the succeeding verses He takes some of the ancient commandments and proceeds to give their fulfilment. He condemns, not only murder, but the thoughts and expressions of hatred and anger, which tend towards murder; not only adultery, but lascivious imagination; not only false oaths, but the untruthful disposition and behaviour which had made oaths seem a necessity for mutual trust; not only retaliation in excess of the injury, but any retaliation at all, recommending compliance and more than compliance with the exorbitant demands of exacting people; He enjoins kindness, not only to neighbours and friends, but also to strangers and enemies. If we survey the

¹ *Christ, the Wisdom of Man*, p. 71.

record of His teaching as a whole, we may classify Our Lord's fulfilment of the Law under the following headings:—

- (a) Not only deeds, but the kindred thoughts and words, are to be deemed right or wrong.
- (b) We must not limit our help and kindly feelings, but extend them to all sorts of people with whom we have to do, not least to those who injure us and bear us malice.¹
- (c) Not only must the commandments be obeyed, but the objects for which they were intended must be secured, so far as practicable.
- (d) Not only must we not injure, but we must do good to, others.
- (e) God requires, not only obedience in definite ways, but the consecration of human life as a whole to the forwarding of His purposes.¹

Jewish teachers also saw that some expansion of the old law was desirable, but they aimed at it in a wrong way—namely, by making the commandments more precise and adding numerous details. The expansion required for the spiritual life was of a far more radical order, as Jesus intimated by saying that a righteousness exceeding that of the Scribes and Pharisees was indispensable for entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.

II

The more perplexing question relates to the statement attributed to Jesus that He retained all the old law even in its minutest details. This occurs in several forms:—

- (1) For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever therefore shall break ["relaxes"—Moffatt] one of the least of these commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the

¹ I have worked this out in more detail in *The Ethics of the Gospel*, chap. ii.

Kingdom of Heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. v. 18, 19).

- (2) It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to fail (Luke xvi. 17).
- (3) Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law—justice, mercy, and fidelity: but these ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone (Matt. xxiii. 23).
- (4) The Scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses' seat: all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, do and observe: but do not after their works; for they say and do not (Matt. xxiii. 2, 3).

All this—except for its criticism of the Jewish authorities—seems to breathe the very spirit of Rabbinism. Our Lord apparently endorses the general opinion of the sanctity of the Torah, as expressed, for instance, by Philo of Alexandria: "The provisions of this Law alone—stable, unmoved, unshaken, as it were stamped with the seal of Nature itself—remain in fixity from the day they were written until now; and for the future we expect them to abide through all time as immortal, so long as the sun and moon and the whole heaven and the world exist."¹ And His practice on several occasions bears this out. For instance, He bade lepers whom He had healed show themselves to the priests and make the customary offerings (Matt. viii. 4; Mark i. 44; Luke xvii. 14). And St. Mark records that in the purging of the Temple He forbade anyone to carry a vessel through the sacred edifice.

But there is not a little in the Gospels of a contrary tendency:—

- (1) Our Lord indicated that ceremonial ordinances should give way to moral ordinances, at least when human needs demand, both in regard to the Sabbath and in dealings with outcasts. Normally, no doubt, He would have counselled as strict an observance of the Sabbath as the actual written law commanded. But

¹ *Vita Mosis*, ii, 3. Similar assertions occur in the Jewish literature of the pre-Christian epoch.

God will "have mercy and not sacrifice"; or, as we might say, the obligation to do kind deeds overrides the obligation to ceremonial acts or abstentions. Again, He was prepared very considerably to mitigate the severity of the criminal law, as to the erring wife: "Neither do I condemn thee."

- (2) He distinguished the original Divine enactments embodied in the sacred Scriptures from subsequent addenda and interpretations. He may be said to have actually encouraged the flouting of these latter. For He allowed His disciples to pluck ears of corn on the Sabbath, to omit the extra fasting of the stricter sects, to eat with unwashed hands; while we read that on one occasion He scandalized His host by doing the same thing Himself (Luke xi. 37, 38). When, on the contrary, He told His disciples to obey the authorities in all respects, it may have been because he wished to avoid giving needless offence, which He actually declared to be His motive in paying the Temple-tax (Matt. xvii. 27).

All this does not necessarily conflict with the previously quoted sayings that enjoin a scrupulous and even minute observance of the Torah; for, first, He distinguishes between the original Law and the later additions; secondly, He declares that when two laws conflict the one which bears more on human need and welfare must prevail.

But there are two parables which at first sight seem to imply that He regarded the religion of the Gospel as presently destined to supersede the religion of the Law. Are not the old garments, sadly in need of repair, and the wineskins, frail with use, both intended to represent the Mosaic Law and the sacrificial system as incapable of sustaining or holding the religion of the Spirit, and therefore soon to be discarded? But in their context these parables hardly invite such an interpretation. For the matter under dispute was the alleged obligation of the disciples to

special fasting, more than the letter of the Law required of every Israelite. And Jesus defends their neglect on the ground that He wishes the period of their association with Him to be, as far as possible, a time of care-free and unrestricted happiness, like that of a wedding-feast. This genial human mood He declares to be incompatible, not with the Mosaic Law, but rather with the Judaism of the Pharisaic order.

That Jesus was not generally understood as having given definite instructions as to the retention or the disuse of old religious customs and institutions, appears probable from the doubts and disputes on the subject that are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of St. Paul. The argument on the one side appears to have rested mainly upon the traditional sanctity of the Mosaic Law and the Temple; and on the other side upon the spiritual quickening that came to Gentiles who accepted Jesus as their Lord without adopting the rites of Judaism. We do not read that either party appealed to any pronouncement of Jesus on the subject, though it is, of course, conceivable that the Judaising party did, but that it was not recorded by the writers of the New Testament. Certainly some of the sayings we find in the Gospels might very well have been quoted in support of the universal obligation to maintain the whole of the Pentateuchal system. Yet there are other sayings, as well as acts, of Our Lord which would, we should have thought, have furnished telling arguments on the liberal side. It is especially strange that St. Paul does not refer to any of these in his letters, even though he did write that he had not received the Gospel which he preached from man, and was not taught it, but that it came to him by revelation (Gal. i. 12).

Prima facie there is a wide difference between Our Lord and St. Paul in their attitudes to the Mosaic Law. Our Lord seems to have insisted on its permanence, saying that while in some respects it should be immensely extended, it should in no particular be curtailed, though there should be some reinterpretation and adjustment. St. Paul, on the contrary, declared that the whole legal system must be abolished, at any rate for

the Gentiles, though as a devout Jew he scrupulously observed it himself and encouraged other Jews to do likewise, doubtless for conciliatory reasons, as when, on the advice of the Apostles and Elders in Jerusalem, he associated himself with four Christian Jews in the performance of a vow and paid the Temple-dues out of his own pocket (Acts xxi. 23, 24). He based morality, not on the Law, but on his conception of Redemption, as being the outcome of the Christian's new spiritual life which he has through faith in Christ.

But what may we suppose was Our Lord's real opinion as to the validity of the ceremonial, as distinct from the moral, law of the Old Testament—such matters as circumcision, avoidance of certain meats, sacrificial offerings, and so on? I suggest the following:—

- (1) To some extent the reported insistence by Our Lord on the minutiae of the ancient covenant—"not one jot or one tittle", "ye tithe mint and anise and cummin—these ought ye to have done"—may be due to the Judaising tendency of the First Gospel, and not truly authentic of Jesus. The Evangelist, wishing to commend "the Way" as wholly orthodox, represented it as including all that was valid in the ancestral religion.—Still the writer would surely not have deliberately put into the mouth of Jesus statements that he had no evidence that He had made. Jesus must have said something that lent itself to a Judaising interpretation.
- (2) Part, at least, of Our Lord's meaning in those sayings was, we can hardly doubt, that all the essentials of the old religion would remain, though in a different form; that the real objects which the Mosaic system was designed to attain, would be attained no less thoroughly in the religion which He was inaugurating. There would be just as much, nay, far more, piety, charity, self-discipline, filial devotion, and the like.

There was not a jot or a tittle of the old but would find expression in the new. This is borne out by His declaration that the Golden Rule includes the law and the prophets—at any rate on the moral side. Provided that men fully kept the Golden Rule, they would virtually keep every detail of the moral principles of the Old Testament. We may recall in this connection Hillel's reply to the man who demanded a succinct statement of the Torah.—Though this goes a long way towards a solution of the problem, it hardly goes the whole way; for some of these sayings attributed to Our Lord evidently required a much more literal or precise observance of the ancient ordinances.

- (3) But is it not conceivable that even in His brief ministry Our Lord developed His own thought on the subject; that He commenced with a strict Judaism, but as He came to perceive that it cramped and fettered the expression and activity of human nature, He grew more and more liberal in His attitude to ancient institutions? This is the opinion of Dr. Oesterley and Dr. Box:—

There is a further consideration which is worth emphasizing. It will not be questioned that by degrees Christ's realization—as far as His human nature was concerned—of His mission on earth became fuller; deeper and wider conceptions arose regarding the all-embracing, world-wide character of His Kingdom on earth; that He and His teaching would of necessity transcend all limitations, must have been a conviction which asserted itself with ever-increasing insistence. And if this was so, then He must have recognized more and more the temporary character of the Law, and His words in Matt. xi. 13, Luke xvi. 16, "The Law and the prophets were until John; from that time the Gospel of the Kingdom of God is preached", become very pregnant with meaning; and even such a passage as Matt. v. 17, 18, which so emphasizes the validity of the Law, may, in view of the words, "till all things be accomplished", be really witnessing to its temporary character; for one may take it that the "all

things" refer to Christ's work on earth. Then, too, the attitude of St. Paul towards the Law, which has not infrequently been regarded as antagonistic to Christ's example, is seen to be based, in effect, upon the later attitude of Christ Himself; for if our surmise, mentioned above, be correct, it will be abundantly evident that, in reality, Christ was equally anxious with St. Paul to "break down the middle wall of partition".¹

While not averse from the supposition that Our Lord's ideas as to the methods by which the Kingdom of God was to be realized did develop in the course of His ministry, we may yet observe that His remark that the Scribes and Pharisees were right in their careful tithing is attributed to the last days of strife with the authorities. Besides which, is it thinkable that Our Lord's generous humanity would have needed the experience which His ministry brought Him to be convinced of the necessity of relaxing some of the more vexatious and cramping ordinances?

(4) All the above explanations may have some truth in them, but I think they need to be supplemented by one hinted at in the above quotation: "one may take it that the 'all things' refer to Christ's work on earth".² It is quite intelligible that He did not wish to disturb Judaism needlessly until the Kingdom of God and the worship appropriate to it were more fully manifested, if only in order "not to offend", as He says with regard to the Temple-tax. As it was, He could not avoid scandalizing the stricter and more conservative with His subordination of ritual to morality, of "sacrifice" to "mercy", and His sloughing-

¹ *The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue*, pp. 174, 175.

² Dr. Moffatt translates the phrase thus: "until it is all in force". Dr. A. Boyd Scott suggests that "Jesus may have expected so widespread a rally to His own revelation of life among His countrymen, that a complete revival of reverence for the Law and the practice of it would prevail. . . . When that was achieved, the Law might 'pass', since the spiritual impulse which generated the revival would now be an abiding inspiration in their souls."—*Op. cit.*, pp. 69, 70. This interpretation would not materially affect the explanation which I put forward of Christ's attitude to the Law.

off of some later accretions. To declare the whole of the levitical legislation obsolete, as St. Paul did for the Gentiles, would indeed have been to "break the bruised reed and quench the smoking flax"—in other words, to prejudice many earnest and devout souls against the Gospel. But He did look forward eventually to a type of religion free from the ancient legalism and institutionalism. This is one interpretation of the saying, in the Fourth Gospel: "Destroy this Temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another without hands." He would "in three days" (a Jewish phrase for a short time—*vide* Luke xiii. 32) establish a religion independent of permanent material adjuncts. In any case, we have the prediction in the same Gospel that the day would come when "neither in this mountain nor in the Temple will men worship the Father", but that a spiritual worship, more true and real than the old, would take its place. And this agrees with the speech of St. Stephen at his trial, who argued that the Temple and its ritual were not essential to the intercourse of man with God. Yet again, in St. Matthew's account of St. Peter's confession we read that Jesus addressed him thus: "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven." Does not this indicate that He endowed His disciples with the right to change the laws and institutions of the religious community which He was founding? In fact, there is considerable evidence that Our Lord's attitude to the Torah was as follows: it was to be scrupulously observed until the spiritual quickening and revelation which He predicted and mediated should have taken place; and then it would be abandoned as having no further utility. And this seems probable enough from its intrinsic wisdom.

One saying, however, concerning the permanence of the Law, from the first of the quoted passages, calls for further analysis and discussion: "Verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from

the law, till all things be accomplished." As it stands, it looks self-contradictory, there being two clauses commencing with "till". We are tempted to interpret the first of these as "unless", in order to make grammar and sense. If we do this, the second clause commencing with "till" would appear to refer to the accomplishment of Christ's redemptive work and the consequent spiritual rebirth of humanity. In the next sentence He proceeds to say that strictness in obeying the old law is a condition of high rank in the new order of things when it shall have come. This may remind us of St. Paul's remark that the "Law was a schoolmaster [or rather a "slave-tutor"] to bring us to Christ". Yet there is no obvious evidence that Our Lord shared St. Paul's theory that the chief object of the Law was to elicit the sense of sin. Rather He seems to take the more normal or common-sense view that the function of the old dispensation was to train and develop men's religious and moral capacities so that they should be ready for the ardent and spontaneous love for God and man when God should come into fuller contact with humanity. Zeal under the old regime would naturally manifest itself in conscientious—not to say, punctilious—observance of the traditional ordinances, and under the new regime, in generous service and self-devotion unhampered by rules. Laxity in respect to those ordinances would probably indicate a deficiency in religious capacity, which would show itself in a comparative feebleness in spirituality under Christianity. He who would rise to the highest in the time to come will be well advised to observe the ancient commandments—apart from later and non-authentic additions—conscientiously and carefully. Those who prematurely give up their religious observances, especially those who encourage others to do so, thereby prejudicing the more conservative among the devout against the Gospel, will have at first to take a humble place in the new society of God's people. The demoralization due to the slackness, and still more to the offence such slackness would occasion, Jesus regarded as perilous and detrimental to the birth and growth of the higher religion which He had come

to establish. He thereby displayed a true psychological insight into human nature in its passage stage by stage along the path of progress.

But in our day may not we learn something from this attitude of Our Lord towards the religious system of His nation? It would seem to suggest that there is a value in some forms of discipline and training with a view to spiritual development, that they should be observed conscientiously by such as feel the need of and appear to derive benefit from them, that by no means are they to be disparaged or ridiculed to the wounding of simple souls, yet that they are to be freely modified in accordance with the sense of spiritual needs, and discarded altogether so soon as it is felt that they have served their purpose.

CHAPTER V

THE METHOD OF TEACHING

I

IT is remarkable how little Our Lord qualified, or indeed explained, His moral utterances. He made brief, seemingly uncompromising, behests and prohibitions: "Resist not him that is evil." "Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn thou not away." "Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink." "Judge not." Surely, we might be tempted to argue, there are occasions when we ought to resist the man with criminal intent; or to refuse the beggar; or to be concerned about to-morrow's family dinner or our children's clothes; or to exercise a little criticism. Why this air of impracticability in His counsels? Indolence would corrupt industry, savagery would stalk unhindered through the land, vice would flourish, squalor and starvation would be everywhere, society would be dissipated in chaos and misery. If all decent people invariably acted thus, the human race would come nigh to extinction.

But, we may proceed to reflect, though Jesus did not state exceptions, yet He acted exceptions, as Dean Rashdall aptly points out:—

I think there is abundant evidence to show that Our Lord did not intend His precepts to be understood with that deadly literalness with which a few Christians and many outside critics of Christianity have insisted on their being understood. He condemned, for instance, the use of the term "fool"; yet He is recorded to have used it Himself on several occasions. He said, "Give to him that asketh of thee"; yet when He felt that a period of rest and retirement was absolutely necessary for the success of his spiritual work, He did not scruple to place Himself beyond the reach of the multitudes who were pressing Him to heal their sick. He said, "Swear not at all"; yet He is recorded to have replied to the High Priest's adjuration, and so to have virtually given evidence on oath before a court of justice. And with regard to this question of non-resistance: His denunciations of Pharisaic hypocrisy show that He could be severe when severity seemed necessary.

On one occasion—the cleansing of the Temple—He may even be said to have used violence Himself.¹

We may add that when He was smitten on the cheek, instead of offering the other, He maintained a dignified silence. And in criticizing the Scribes and Pharisees He made an exception to the injunction, “Judge not”.

Dean Rashdall’s contention is that “Our Lord set before us principles, general rules, ideals—not statutes.”²

Dr. E. F. Scott supports this view:—

It was no part of His design to draw up an ethical code, in which the demands of the moral law should be carefully articulated and traced out in all their consequences. Much less did He set Himself to formulate a legal code. . . . The results of this legalizing of morality were already manifest in Judaism. The memory was burdened with an accumulation of rules; essentials were buried under endless particularities; the more closely the net was woven, the easier it was to make loopholes for casuistical evasion. Jesus perceived these mischievous results, and proceeded deliberately on a different plan. Instead of framing laws He stated principles, and made them so few and broad and simple that no one could overlook them. . . . His aim was to mark out with perfect clearness the great principles of the moral life, leaving men free to apply them in each particular case, as the occasion required.³

But what precisely is the difference between laws or rules or, as Rashdall calls them, precepts, on the one hand, and principles on the other? Professors Dewey and Tufts explain it thus:—

Rules are practical; they are habitual ways of doing things. But principles are intellectual; they are useful methods of judging things. . . . No genuine moral principle prescribes a specific course of action; rules, like cooking recipes, may tell just what to do and how to do it. A moral principle, such as that of chastity, of justice, of the golden rule, gives the agent a basis for looking at and examining a particular question that comes up. . . . A moral principle, then, is not a command to act or forbear acting in a given way: it is a tool for analysing a special situation, the right or wrong being determined by the situation in its entirety, and not by the rule as such.⁴

¹ *Principles and Precepts*, pp. 8, 9.

² *Ibid.*, p. 11. He suggests that the prohibition of divorce is to be similarly interpreted. But see *Civilization Remade by Christ*, chapter on “Marriage”.

³ *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 27, 28.

⁴ *Ethics*, pp. 333, 334.

This seems an excessively intellectualist way of putting it. I suggest that the difference might be better expressed thus: a rule resembles the command of a superior officer, which must be carried out, with no asking the reason why; whereas a principle is to take effect so far as the agent sees it to be possible, with due regard to other relevant principles and to the main values and purposes of life. Thus when Jesus said, "Give to him that asketh of thee", He meant that when others make requests we are to apply so far as practicable the principle of generosity. To encourage indolent beggars would not be true generosity, and almsgiving that starved our own children would conflict with the equally or more important principle of parental love. Yet the injunction is susceptible of literal fulfilment more commonly than might at first appear. For it does not tell us to give what others ask us to, or what they wish us to, but simply to give to them. Thus, to take trouble to get a man employment may not be to give him what he asks for or wants, but what will be most to his advantage.

Failure to appreciate that the moral instruction in the Gospels, though in the form of rules, is really an enunciation of principles, accounts very much for refusal to acknowledge His ethical supremacy.¹ To some extent we may gather His meaning from His illustrations, as when, after forbidding resistance to evil, He proceeds, "Whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also"—a proverbial and partly humorous saying, which evidently refers to hot temper rather than to murderous assault. Similarly, the sort of forgiveness which God expects may be gathered from the parable of the Unmerciful Servant, who ought at least to have given his fellow-servant time to pay. In another passage Our Lord is reported as telling His disciples to treat one who obstinately refuses to repent with a severity which has made some critics doubt whether He really said this (Matt. xviii. 15-17).² The great saying, "Love your enemies", seems less open to mis-

¹ E.g. by Professor Kirsopp Lake, *Hibbert Journal*, October 1924, "Jesus".

² Vide Rashdall, *Conscience and Christ*, p. 149.

conception.¹ It is perfectly possible to be sorry for and to try to help people who for one reason or another bear a grudge against us or regard our well-intentioned policy as inimical to their interests and the general welfare. By means of constant courtesy and timely aid in their difficulties we may sometimes succeed in winning their respect. And though we can hardly be required to feel any fervent affection towards real criminals who maliciously attack those whom we love most dearly, we may yet reflect that, as Plato said, it is a worse evil for a man to do wrong than to suffer wrong, and to pray for them as Our Lord did for those who crucified Him. The command to love enemies signifies that we should penetrate in imagination through their evil intentions to their inner souls, regarding them as sensitive creatures like ourselves, and feel pity for them, so cruelly warped and tortured by horrid lusts and delusions. He who is wronged has a peculiar responsibility and power to save the wrong-doer through the Divine potency of pardoning love.

As maintained in previous chapters, Our Lord would probably have developed His moral teaching in its social and international bearings if His hearers had laid to heart and put into practice His elementary instruction. If he had done so, some of our perplexity with regard to the manner in which the primary principles were to be applied would have been relieved. But it is not likely that He would ever have radically altered His method of teaching—of giving principles instead of rules, and of illustrating them as He illustrated neighbourhood and mercy in the parable of the Good Samaritan. For not only are rules, however elaborate, incapable of meeting all the various circumstances of life, but man as a child of God is expected to use his intelligence and imagination and initiative in moral action. He is told the principle, which in course of time he apprehends as self-evident by his own moral and spiritual insight, and is left to apply it to the best of his ability under ever-changing situations.

¹ Yet see Professor Kirsopp Lake, *op. cit.*

Where another moralist might have given abstract nouns (generosity, forgiveness, mercy), Our Lord utters imperatives (give, forgive, be merciful), according to the customary manner of instruction, and with a view to vividness and emphasizing obligation. More scientifically and tamely we might say that to various conditions and situations certain kinds of behaviour are appropriate, as remedies and methods of improvement: to poverty, generosity is appropriate; to aggressiveness, forbearance and the offer to help; to divergence of opinion, tolerance; to hatred, love. These are the specific cures, analogous to the principles of treatment impressed on the medical student, which he must later apply intelligently according to the peculiarities of individual cases. Normally, among neighbours and acquaintances, there is less need for exceptions in the application of the moral principles than some may think. If my neighbour objects to the tree in my garden which keeps the sun from his flowers, it will usually make for peace and harmony if I not only offer to cut it down, but ask if there is any other alteration he would like me to make, notwithstanding that I may consider his request a little exacting. If he asks for the loan of a loaf or a pint of milk, it is well to comply even at considerable inconvenience to myself, and to refrain from demands for repayment, especially if he has a struggle to make ends meet. Similar forbearance and compliance and generosity will be found good policy between nations and states. It is in dealing with strangers, people widely separated from us in dwelling-place and mode of existence, that we have to apply these principles more cautiously. For instance, it is no true generosity to give to fraudulent idlers whom we are not likely to see again. But it does not follow that Christ's principles are less applicable to this class of cases; rather, a profounder grasp and more thorough application of them seems to be called for. The doctrine of the Sermon on the Mount will convey potent remedies for many of the ills of civilization, if we have the patience and the sincerity to understand them, and the faith and perseverance to put them into practice.

II

St. Mark states that at one time Our Lord's only method of teaching the people was the parabolic: "He never spoke to them except by way of parable" (iv. 34—Moffatt). What, then, had caused Him to renounce the method of brief and pregnant sayings adopted in the Sermon on the Mount? He intimates that it was the crass stupidity of His audience, which He describes in the ironical words of Isaiah's vision. This in its original context seemingly asserts that the Lord God actually told the prophet deliberately to "make the heart of this people fat"—that is, make their intelligence obtuse. But if we attend to St. Matthew's record carefully, we read that Jesus modified the irony by saying that He taught in parables, not in order to produce, but *because of*, the prevalent stupidity: "Therefore speak I to them in parables, because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand." Evidently He regarded the parable as peculiarly suitable to the dense and slow-witted. This is understandable. Picturesque and vivid stories remain in the untrained mind more than direct statements of religious and moral principles.

But why did He not explain the parables to the people as He did to His disciples, since we read that He invariably told the latter the explanation in private afterwards? There were perhaps several reasons for this difference of treatment. For one thing, He wished the multitude to think out His message for themselves, seeing that the truths which we attain by hard thought are apt to mean more to us, and develop our intelligence and moral sensibility better, than those which are told us directly. But the disciples in their discussions with their Master would have all the intellectual exercise in the mysteries of the Kingdom of God which they needed. Moreover, it was more important to make sure that they understood, since they were to become teachers themselves. Possibly also He wished to keep the multitude for the present at a considerable distance from any idea that He claimed the Messiahship, for fear of a

political interpretation of this claim. Besides, He may have preferred to leave them wondering, without the false certainty that might have seemed to warrant them setting themselves up as teachers. Doubtless He preferred to have a few thoughtful and intelligent representatives without interference from many superficial adherents, seeing that for those who did not understand very deeply at the time there would be opportunities for more education in the Gospel later. Though man's life is brief, God is not in a hurry, since all souls belong to Him for ever.

We may further observe that it was not in the main the simpler moral and religious teaching which He gave by parables, but the nature of the coming Kingdom of Heaven. For the parable of the Good Samaritan is rather a story to illustrate a definite ethical doctrine than a strict parable. Direct statement is more appropriate to moral precepts, and a metaphorical and suggestive manner of discourse to the less familiar and more difficult topic of the Divine plan and methods. Later, during His last visit to Jerusalem, He used the parable with other objects: to bring home to the Jewish authorities their scandalous misuse of their official position and power, and to put forward in veiled but hardly mistakable language His Messianic claim.

In one passage He indicates that this parabolic veiling of truth would become obsolete. In St. Mark, after He has hinted at His motive for speaking in parables (apparently not to make Divine truths too cheap) and has given the disciples the interpretation of the parable of the Sower, He proceeds thus: "Is the lamp brought to be put under the bushel ["under a bowl"—Moffatt], or under the bed, and not to be put on the stand? For there is nothing hid, save that it should be manifested; neither was anything made secret but that it should come to light." In St. Matthew we find this definite behest: "What I tell you in the darkness, speak ye in the light: and what ye hear in the ear, proclaim upon the housetops." Certainly we do not read of any of the Apostles speaking in parables; and there is comparatively little of the parabolic nature in the other books of the New Testament.

The reasons for the veiled form of teaching no longer held good with the passing of Christ to the heavenly state, invisible to mankind. The danger of a political rising in His Name was no more. Unauthorized exponents of the Gospel with only a superficial comprehension thereof would gain little hearing as against the accredited Apostles who had known the Christ. And now that the new religion was becoming organized, systematic teaching would provide the mental exercise which is so valuable for the apprehension of truth.

III

Yet another aspect of Our Lord's teaching which may be noticed under this heading is the friendliness and kindliness—the ingratiating and engaging manner, we might almost say—with which He approaches His audiences. In this He contrasts very strongly with John the Baptist, who is recorded thus: “Ye offspring of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” This, according to St. Matthew, was said to Pharisees and Sadducees; according to St. Luke, to the multitudes in general. John's forecast of the Messiah was, to say the least, threatening: “He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing floor; and he will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.” This is in flat contradiction to Our Lord's own dictum: “They that are well have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” It was surely very largely on this account that Jesus, while recognizing the tremendous greatness of the man, declared that the least in the Kingdom of Heaven was greater than John. For he had not learnt even the A B C of Christian compassion. We may find here also the explanation of another saying, which has greatly puzzled commentators: “From the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth

violence, and men of violence press into it" (partly Moffatt). The austere prophet of the desert had set a fashion of denunciation and ferocity in his proclamation and practice of the new righteousness, which Jesus with His sublime patience felt to be overstrained, though He cordially admitted that John had his special task and that he did it well according to his lights. "Wisdom", He remarked, "is justified of her children."

Jesus compared Himself to children who play cheerful music and invite to the wedding game, in contrast to John, who resembled other children playing doleful music so as to pretend a funeral. We may recall His gracious and engaging attitude in the synagogue of Nazareth, when He quoted the prophecy of the coming of Utopia, but purposely omitted the reference to vengeance (Isa. lxi. 2). And then He makes contact with His audience, mentioning His connection with the town and district and quoting a couple of popular proverbs. Nevertheless, His delicate allusions to the Divine mercies to Gentiles in olden times grossly offended the congregation. Later, when He perceived that the whole nation, through repudiation of His offer of national salvation and world hegemony in service, was heading for utter ruin, He warns them in no uncertain language: "Unless ye reform, ye shall all in like manner perish," referring to recent tragic happenings. Our Lord could be terribly severe when He saw men heedlessly incurring danger, either earthly or supernatural. But He began by approaching them with kindly words and winning smiles and a heart of profound sympathy.

CHAPTER VI

FORCE AND PERSUASION

IN a previous book I discussed three different explanations of Our Lord's prohibition of resistance to evil and rejected them all.¹ In place of them I put forward the theory that the principle of non-resistance is to be interpreted in accordance with the examples by which it is illustrated: a blow on the face in anger, a law-suit, compulsory transport for the Roman Government.² In the present volume I have just argued that, though Our Lord did not state exceptions to His principles, yet He acted them. In the case of the principle in question the acted exception which most readily occurs to our thoughts is that of clearing the Temple court of the traders and money-changers, which was especially vehement according to St. John's Gospel, where He is said to have made a scourge of small cords. Yet, as Bishop Gore points out, "it is a mistake to speak of the cleansing of the Temple with the scourge of small cords as an act of physical force. . . . The force was wholly on their side. If He overcame, it was by the weight of a moral authority which they dared not resist."³

I do not think we can so easily dispose of His advice to the disciples at the Last Supper to purchase swords. Even if we adopt Professor F. C. Burkitt's interpretation of the saying as a piece of "melancholy playfulness", intended to convey the contrast between their former popularity and the hostility which they must henceforth expect,⁴ yet we have still to reckon with the fact that they already had two swords about their persons. Evidently, then, Our Lord did not explicitly forbid His disciples to carry weapons for self-defence. As the narrative continues, Peter shortly afterwards made use of one of

¹ *The Ethics of the Gospel*, pp. 66-73.

² Vide W. C. Allen, *International Critical Commentary on St. Matthew*, p. 54.

³ *Christ and Society*, p. 57.

⁴ *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, pp. 140, 141.

them for this purpose. That Jesus told him to sheathe his sword does not imply that He considered self-defence to be wrong under any circumstances, but rather that He did not wish him to interfere with the predestined sacrifice of the Son of Man (*vide* Luke xxii. 22). His remark at the moment, "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword", is naturally to be understood as prohibiting only aggression; and resistance to constituted authority, however unjustly the authority might be behaving, is to be counted as aggression. I think that we may gather from all this that Our Lord at least permitted the use of weapons for self-defence against private violence of an extreme character. And though the advice to carry swords in the future was probably to some extent ironical, it at least countenances the idea that to do so was not absolutely wrong. Besides, though two swords, or any number of them in so small a company, would have been of no practical avail against the strong arm of the law, whether Jewish or Roman, they might have kept at bay unauthorized attacks by private enemies.

Why should anyone be shocked at this? If I were taking my child on a journey through a lawless country, would it not be right for me to protect his or her person from brutal outrage, just by letting people see that I have a revolver? Or, if I am travelling alone, ought I not similarly to safeguard my own person for the sake of my children at home? The moral interests of those who might be tempted to murder or outrage me or my child would appear to demand this measure of self-protection.

On the other hand, Jesus did on one occasion, if not on two, forbid His disciples to carry weapons, and may be deemed to have implicitly discouraged the practice as a regular habit. When He sent out the Twelve and the Seventy to spread the news of the Kingdom of God, He ordered them to go unarmed, as well as without purses or changes of raiment, presumably in order to manifest their confidence in the friendliness and hospitality of those to whom they went.

To approach a decent-minded man without the means of defence not only disarms suspicion but appeals to his innate chivalry and sense of honour; and for the sake of human fellowship it is often worth running some risks to do so. A classical instance of this is the story of the Quakers landing in America and going among the Red Indians absolutely unarmed, the venture proving a complete success. It is certainly better that we should go about among one another in a trusting way. Yet this does not imply that where serious danger is apprehended from the unbridled passions of degenerate human nature, we should not be prepared to protect the lives of our children, and our own lives for their sakes and for the sake of our mission in the world. All this seems to agree with the record of Our Lord's behaviour and instructions to His disciples.

This leads us on to consider His attitude to established authority—to civil law and government. I think we may gather that He approved of a government protecting its subjects, even by forcible means, if really necessary. For He made occasional allusions to imprisonment and judicial punishment with no intimation of disapproval. When St. Paul later wrote that "the powers that be are ordained of God", we have no particular reason for supposing that he was expressing an opinion opposed to the mind of his Master; even though we may choose to believe that Jesus would have been more lenient than His disciple if He had had to make or administer penal laws. Certainly His mention of flogging affords no warrant for the supposition that He would have advocated corporal punishment; just as we cannot infer from His allusions to the relation of master and bondservant that He considered slavery a commendable institution. But that He approved of some public control of crime seems a probable inference, to say the least, from His warnings of the correction which flagrant sinners will receive in Gehenna.

That He counselled submission to, and even willing co-operation with, established governments, is very evident. He

paid the Temple-tax along with Peter, "lest we cause them to stumble". He told the Jews to pay their taxes to the pagan overlord who had usurped authority over the Chosen People. He counselled them to do more than they were asked in the way of conscript service. Dr. E. F. Scott expresses all this very well:—

In His own behaviour Jesus was duly observant of all civic laws and ordinances. At the trial it was found impossible to produce any real evidence against Him as a disturber of public order, and for this reason Pilate was inclined to set Him free. Throughout His teaching He assumed that men ought to submit to constituted authority and discharge the obligations laid on them by the State. Many of His parables turn on the relations of king and subject, master and servant; and it is significant that He is always on the side of loyalty, and thinks of rebellion as a crime which must be punished.¹

But this did not prevent Him from severely criticizing pagan governments to His disciples: "The kings of the Gentiles have lordship over them; and they that have authority over them are called Benefactors." He was aware that pride and the lust of domination and the itch for adulation characterized the great empires of the world. In contrast to this He gives the true principle of society in the Kingdom of God—that of service. The chief man is to be the servant of the commonweal.

We may infer from all this that He hoped to reform, indeed radically to transform, human society. But His method was to be not of force, but of persuasion; the conquest of humble and suffering love. Here probably we may discern the significance of His reply to the temptation to become the lord of the world by worshipping Satan. To subdue the kingdoms of the world and win their glory by the usual methods of armed aggression and political scheming would have been, in effect, to bow down before the wicked spirit of egoism dominant in the world. His must be a victory of appeal to men's better nature, which, as the event proved, meant the Cross. This was one reason why He repudiated so vehemently the suggestion of the sons of Zebedee to invoke thunderbolts upon

¹ *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus*, p. 79.

the inhospitable Samaritans. Again, He symbolized His method of claiming kingship by His humble entrance into Jerusalem in fulfilment of an ancient prophecy, escorted enthusiastically by simple country-folk and riding on a lowly beast of burden.

When dealing with the subject of Our Lord's attitude to government and social institutions, we should notice His reply to the man who had a grievance against his brother on some matter of inheritance: "Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?" The reply is couched as a rhetorical question in a familiar and slightly ironical tone. I would venture to paraphrase it thus: "My dear fellow, whatever put the idea into your head that it was my business to settle money disputes?" Certainly Jesus had abundant reason for refusing to intervene. First, if He had done so, the man against whom the decision was given could hardly have failed to have been prejudiced against the Gospel. Secondly, to have arbitrated would have been to associate the Gospel ideals of righteousness too much with notions of equity in financial arrangements. Thirdly, by not intervening Jesus was able to make the man's request an opportunity for a warning against over-estimation of material wealth. But we must avoid treating Our Lord's behaviour on this occasion as an argument for the Church not demanding a better distribution of wealth. For He virtually called for this when He proclaimed the Golden Rule and the obligation to generosity. On the other hand, that the redistribution should be effected voluntarily, as the result of the permeation of society by moral principles and kindly inclinations, seems a legitimate inference from His deprecation of force and commendation of meekness.

The meek, He declared, shall inherit the earth. Those who submit, who patiently endure, who conciliate the wielders of power with friendly demeanour and obliging behaviour, will remain; whereas the proud and combative, who impetuously seize the sword to assert their rights, ere long destroy one another. Meekness, in biological language, has "survival

value". In the form of mutual deference and self-effacing readiness to serve it appears also as one of the essential virtues of the commonwealth of the children of God.

In our endeavour to attain Christ's point of view in all His insistence on meekness, non-resistance, forbearance, love for enemies, we must set these qualities against the background of man's inhumanity to man down the ages—the ferocity and cruelty and oppression which have been prompted by ambition and pride and lust of battle and avarice and terror. Nationally and individually, in secular and in religious disagreements, hatred—to use a single term for various sorts of antagonism—has wrecked and tortured and slaughtered, sparing neither age nor sex. Jesus declared that this universal blood-feud must cease; people must refrain from participating in it, even at the cost of personal loss, humiliation, and untimely death. He offered a panacea for this aspect of the world's woe. It is a panacea with two sides—the negative being not to hit back, the positive being to show unremitting kindness in both deed and prayer. To this the feverish disease of ill-will must yield, surely if slowly—yet not so slowly if we are zealous and persevering with the remedy which Jesus prescribes, the remedy which is rooted in a patient and tender sympathy for all beings who bear the name of human, however degraded and savage they may appear.

APPENDIX

EXEGESIS OF MARK XII. 17

"RENDER unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's" is susceptible of two divergent interpretations: (1) Let Cæsar have his coins, marked with his own name and picture; God demands quite a different service—chiefly worship and charity; (2) In supporting Cæsar's government you are really promoting human welfare as God wills it.

1. Dr. Montefiore supports the former: "What are we to say of this famous answer? It implied that there was a field in which the Emperor had authority, but that religion, without interfering with the legitimate

rights of the Emperor, could exist in its fullness notwithstanding. The rule of Rome need not interfere with the practice of religion." He quotes with approval M. Loisy: "Civil obedience, attested by the payment of the tribute, no more contradicts than it abolishes the obedience due to God. The first of these duties does not interfere with the second. The first is trivial in comparison with the second. Let men observe it without attaching greater importance to it than it possesses, and let them give their minds above all to the essential duty, which is moral and religious duty" (*Synoptic Gospels*, 2nd edn., vol. i, pp. 277, 278). Vide *The Ethics of the Gospel*, pp. 173, 174.

2. In a recent article (*The Modern Churchman*, March 1929) the Rev. E. P. Boys Smith interprets the passage thus: "He affirmed that in paying tribute to Cæsar, the heathen ruler, they had their opportunity of fulfilling a religious duty which they owed to God. The answer did not mean 'Render to Cæsar some things and to God other things', but 'Render what the law requires of you and *thereby* render what God requires of you.' " He supports this by reference to St. Paul's description of Cæsar's tax-collectors: "They are ministers of God's service attending continually upon this very thing" (Rom. xiii. 6).

Unless Jesus explained what He meant, it seems unlikely that His hearers would have understood Him in this latter sense. And we may conjecture that He did not think it opportune to attempt to instruct the Jews concerning the relations of civil government to religion and the Kingdom of God. His immediate object was probably to discountenance rebellion, without making Him and His disciples appear disloyal to the God of their fathers. We may also suppose that He had in mind the conciliation of worldly authorities by means of submissive and obliging behaviour. Cp. Matt. v. 41. If, however, anyone had professed to interpret Him as meaning that loyal support of established government is one way of serving God, we need not think He would have objected. For He doubtless would have regarded the peace and order secured by Rome as favourable to the spread of the Gospel and the growth of God's Kingdom. It is even conceivable that St. Paul's view of the beneficence of the Roman rule was indirectly derived from the tradition of his Master's teaching. In any case, we have ample warrant for believing that Jesus regarded obedience and loyalty to the State as essential to the service of God and man.

CHAPTER VII

MORAL PRINCIPLES

Is the whole of Our Lord's moral teaching deducible from a single principle? In two passages in the Gospel we seem to be given such a master principle of ethics. The first is the so-called Golden Rule: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them." This is immediately followed by the words, "for this is the law and the prophets". The second passage is the twofold law of love for God and love for neighbour: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Then come the words: "On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets." One would incline to think this remark more appropriate here, seeing that the Golden Rule concerns morality only, whereas the twofold law of love includes religion. Nevertheless, a similar comprehensiveness is attributed to the negative Golden Rule, in the anecdote about Hillel related in a previous chapter. Even as morality the Golden Rule appears inferior to the commandment, "Love thy neighbour as thyself", in that love is more than impartiality between self and others, though it might be judged superior as inculcating a wider altruism. Yet "neighbour" was susceptible of the interpretation, "anyone within range of action". So apparently St. Paul, when he writes: "For this, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."¹

¹ The parable of the Good Samaritan is intended to show an extension of the meaning of "neighbour". According to Heinrich Wendt's interpretation the Samaritan became the neighbour of the Jew through his noble act, so that henceforth the Jew would have to regard the Samaritan as his neighbour. Vide *The Ethics of the Gospel*, p. 39.

But we should bear in mind that Our Lord was not giving ethical definitions, but rather expressing Himself in familiar language, or at least in such as would strike responsive chords in His hearers; for the two commandments of love were not original in Jesus, and the Golden Rule was at most only the positive form of what was well known negatively. Further, it may be observed that He is not reported as declaring that any or all of these precepts comprised the whole of morality, but all that which was taught in the books of the Old Testament. At the same time, the two commandments of love do indicate what, according to the deeper truth of the New Testament, is the very essence of Godhead and the ideal state of the Universe—the living for and in union with all, which by Jesus was symbolized by the terms “Father” and “brethren”, and by the most mystical of His disciples by “love”. The first commandment is the principle of religion; the second is the principle of morality. The relation of religion to morality consists chiefly in the interdependence of love to God and love to man.

But even in the widest meaning of “neighbour” it is not at first sight apparent how all morality is comprised in or derivative from the bare injunction to love him as we love ourselves. Would it, for instance, necessarily exclude bodily self-indulgence, or, at any rate, lift man above materialistic and commonplace schemes for the general well-being? Though vice is often cruel and worldliness callous, yet we might imagine a community of which the members practised strict unselfishness by impartially sharing with one another the means to sensuous pleasures and animal contentment. Yet, however self-consistent such love for man might appear, it would not agree with love for God, in whom is all spiritual excellence. In loving God each will discern the possibility and value of hallowing and spiritualizing all his life, and will in consequence help others to attain the same good. In this way a nobler love for man will arise out of love for God, service out of prayer, morality out of religion.

Secondly, we have to consider the place of work in our scheme of practical ethics. Work, though *prima facie* distinct from kindness, may be regarded as a more prolonged and deliberate form of help or benevolence, since through work we provide for the more constant needs of others. Though Our Lord is not recorded as having said so, we may well think of Him as inculcating diligence in daily labour as a necessary outcome of the second of the great commandments in which the Law was summed up. But we find Him concerned rather with the special tasks which were obligatory on His disciples and converts, as when He chided or warned those who would procrastinate or for domestic reasons evade the behest to preach the Kingdom of God (Luke ix. 59-62, cp. Matt. x. 37). To the same order probably belong His insistence on industry and enterprise in the parables of the Pounds and the Talents, and His warnings against slackness in the parables about servants (Luke xvii. 7-10, Matt. xxiv. 45-51). As before, mere love for neighbour is inadequate; love for God is needed for a knowledge of the value of such tasks and their conscientious fulfilment.

Yet a further stage of morality appears in Our Lord's demands for self-sacrifice in His disciples: "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." "Whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple." This call to heroism and suffering appears even more remote than the obligation to work, from the duty of loving our neighbours, until it is interpreted in the light of God's purposes which are revealed to those that love Him. But in that light the present need of humanity and the glory predestined by God for humanity will be seen to require that love for man should express itself in superhuman devotion and self-sacrifice. The immediate loss and suffering will appear a small price to pay for the deliverance and glorious life which are thereby to be won for our fellow-creatures.

Thus there appear three stages in the morality which

Christ enjoined: kindness, work, self-sacrifice. The first was obligatory on all, the second in its more religious form on those called to special tasks for the salvation of mankind, the third on His actual disciples and more responsible ministers in the preparation of the world for the Kingdom of God. In the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere in the popular teaching of Jesus we find insistence on mercy, forbearance, forgiveness, tolerance, and other forms of altruism; while in the description of the judgment of the nations He seems to represent kindness to people in distress and the lack of it as the only grounds respectively for sending some to Heaven and others to hell. The parables in which He emphasized the need of diligence, industry, enterprise, alertness, and the like were probably addressed mainly if not exclusively to His disciples. But He castigates the Jewish authorities for their neglect and mismanagement of their official tasks—for instance, in the parables of the Two Sons and the Wicked Husbandmen; for it was they who hitherto had been chiefly responsible for the religious welfare of the nation. The invitations to absolute self-consecration to the service of the Kingdom of God, with brave endurance of loss and suffering, are spoken to disciples or candidates for discipleship.

And yet He spoke of self-sacrifice as universally requisite for the highest attainment, for life in its true sense: "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall save it. For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose or forfeit his own self?" Let us set this beside His tender invitation to "all that labour and are heavy laden": "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." How are the two compatible? Is the cross such a light burden? And in what sense is self-sacrifice incumbent on all, as it is declared to be, and not only on those who were Christ's disciples in the literal sense? It is the

difficulty which Shakespeare represents as puzzling Richard II in his last soliloquy:—

The better sort,
As thoughts of things divine, are intermix'd
With scruples, and do set the word itself
Against the word:
As thus, "Come, little ones," and then again,
"It is as hard to come as for a camel
To thread the postern of a small needle's eye."

Evidently Our Lord conceived of the moral preparation for eternal life as, for most people at least, of considerable duration; that is, if we are to harmonize His different sayings. For the weary and heavy-laden the immediate necessity is rest; and when they have rested awhile, then duties that are not very arduous. To the various unfortunates, to the sick in body and soul, whom He rescued and healed, the idea of forsaking everything and taking up the cross would have been terrifying and impossible. When they had been nursed back to moral health and had for a while successfully borne their easy yoke, they would be fit for tasks requiring more strength and faith, and so on by stages. At last would come the call to the supreme venture and self-sacrifice of martyrdom or its equivalent—to some heroism that could fairly be termed without exaggeration "losing the life".

Our Lord's words imply that all who would attain the highest must not only carry through important tasks, but also undergo self-sacrifice in His service, must take up their daily cross and lose their lives to forward the great purposes of God. But for the majority this cannot be in the same kinds of activities in which the early disciples were invited to labour and suffer—chiefly those of evangelizing an indifferent and hostile world. If Christ's words are to hold good (and they appear self-evident to spiritual insight), Christians must find in the normal ways of life corresponding kinds of difficult and patient labour, and also equivalent occasions for self-sacrifice either remarkable or unobtrusive, either sudden or long-drawn-out, veritable renunciations and heroisms in the

Name of their Master and in the Spirit of His Father and theirs.

But perhaps the truer title for the third stage of the morality inculcated by Jesus would be "self-consecration" rather than "self-sacrifice". For the latter suggests a constant painfulness, which is surely not the invariable concomitant of the highest virtue. Self-consecration is the absolute devotion of the whole personality to the realization of the good which God wills. Self-sacrifice, in the sense of the surrender of valued elements of life, is incidental to self-consecration, both as condition and as consequence. The true nature of self-sacrifice appears in those words of Our Lord: "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left home, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or lands, for My sake, and for the Gospel's sake, but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, homes, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come, eternal life." The individual detaches himself from what has been for some time his habitual instruments and objects of activity and satisfaction, because these impede and hinder him in his service or work for the ideal good, especially preventing him from fresh extensions of his service; but ere long he obtains other instruments and objects, which more than compensate for those from which he has parted. This is so whether the self-sacrifice involves drastic change in this life or transition from this life to another life—what is called "death". In the former case the individual finds satisfaction, as Christ said, in new kinds of wealth and new friendships, not without sundry troubles and sorrows. In the latter case he passes to a richer life. Thus self-sacrifice appears to be a sort of violent alteration in the attachments and adaptation of the personality—a more or less painful act of detachment from the environment which it has appropriated and in which it has intertwined itself, followed by the appropriation of a new environment in which it proceeds to make itself at home, as in the previous. This self-severance from its environment,

which may, or may not, include the physical body and its connections, fortifies the consecration of the personality to the ideal, since it is an act of preferring the maximum service of the Divine ideal, in spite of a more or less painful wrench, to a less effective service with comfortable continuance in the way of life to which it has become habituated. If it be asked whether self-consecration will always from time to time involve self-sacrifice, we may reply that the personality, as it develops spiritually, will become less tethered to its environment and be able to readapt itself with less pain to the varying and expanding requirements of the service of God. Thus self-sacrifice appears as alike a condition, an earnest, and a result of self-consecration. It constitutes a spiritual purgation and tonic; it is the acceptance of the sorrow which deepens the joy of life. We may add that it seems improbable that there will ever be final severance of the ties of love between soul and soul. The disciple of Christ will find, not only new "brethren and sisters and mothers and children", but in some far-off time the very same as he knew before.

We find, then, three main branches in the moral life, which to some extent constitute successive stages of moral development: kindness, work, self-consecration. It goes without saying that kindness and work are not discontinued, but rather heightened, when self-consecration takes place. Nevertheless, the claims of kindness may sometimes have to give way to those of work, as when Christ withdrew from the crowds desiring to have their sick healed, in order to prepare for a further stage in His mission; and the claims of work may have to yield to the self-sacrifice involved in self-consecration, as when He went to the Cross, instead of continuing to preach the Kingdom of God. Further, it is to be noticed that a subsequent stage may co-exist in an incomplete form with an earlier. Even the casually kind-hearted normally perform some more or less continuous service for the community, and many who hardly deserve the title of "saints", yet have their moments of self-offering to God, now and

again sacrificing amusements and aims for the sake of others. The idea of self-consecration to God, with self-sacrifice in the service of mankind, is so imbedded in Christianity that it cannot fail to affect almost all Christians who take their religion at all seriously, subtly sanctifying their whole life and character. But it is still with the majority a qualifying rather than a transforming influence, and is therefore impotent to produce, except perhaps in certain emergencies, any high degree of self-sacrifice or heroic venture.

Can we bring these three branches and stages of morality under a more general concept? How may we envisage and describe the single essence of which they are distinguishable forms? They are evidently degrees of conformity of the personality to the process of the realization of good. In kindness the individual may be relatively self-centred and immobile, only now and again conforming his acts to the needs of those about him. In work he conforms his activity in regular and continuous ways, causing a considerable portion of his available energy over a lengthy period to minister to human needs, and to that end he has to discipline his inclinations, even with some effort and self-denial. In self-consecration he gives himself, he yields his personality as a whole, to be an instrument or agent of some great purpose or ideal. He wills to be whatever may be for the maximum good. He surrenders himself to be completely conformed to the will of God directed to the universal good. But in the consecrated life kindness and work continue as before. Love for man is apt to be more intense in kindness, since that involves sympathetic feeling for definite individuals with definite needs and hopes. Love for God comes to its fruition more in self-consecration, since therein the soul surrenders itself to the purpose of God, which surpasses ordinary human conceptions of the needs of mankind.¹ Work constitutes a sort of link between these extremes, as being the regular fulfilment of certain aspects

¹ Cp. Our Lord's rebuke to Peter: "Your outlook is not God's, but man's" (Matt. xvi. 23—Moffatt).

of the will of God to meet the needs of individuals or of society.

If we wish for a single concept to express all the morality enjoined by Our Lord, we may take that of "the production of good", which includes the good consisting in the relief of our neighbours' wants, the wider good of contributions to the welfare of society, the supreme good of the realization of the Divine ideal of the Universe. Good or value is produced by the co-operation of God with the rational and moral beings that spring from and are dependent on Him. The supreme good is attainable only by their complete co-operation. The name for that co-operation in the New Testament is "love", comprising God's love for His children, their love for Him, their love for one another. And love is not only the driving force of the process whereby good is created; it is also the main constituent of the good. Hence the supreme position given by both Christ and His disciples to that quality, at once so obvious and simple, and so transcendent and passing all understanding.

CHAPTER VIII

THE VALUE OF CONDUCT

It is well sometimes to put to ourselves fundamental questions, even though we may be puzzled to find the answer; such a question as this: "What is the good of doing good?" More scientifically and formally it may be expressed in this way: "What bearing has moral conduct upon the realization of ideals?" From a religious standpoint we might phrase our question thus: "How are we, by obeying God, able to help God to accomplish His purposes?" Finally, if we use the terms given to us by Jesus: "In what way, if in any, do men, by loving God and their neighbours, assist in producing or increasing the Kingdom of God?"

Now, it has been strenuously contended by more than one theologian that, in Our Lord's view, the Kingdom of God was not to be an achievement, in whole or in part, by men, but a gift of God to men. As representative of this interpretation of the Gospel we may take what Dr. E. F. Scott writes:—

He [Jesus] allowed, perhaps, for an element of human co-operation in so far as men might prevail on God, by prayer and repentance and earnest longing, to hasten His purpose before the appointed day. There are signs that one of His chief aims was to awaken this desire which would bring the Kingdom nearer; and it may be that He thought of His own death as an offering to which God would respond by shortening the days. Nevertheless, the coming of the Kingdom is God's act, and all that men can do is to wait on God and beseech Him to anticipate the set time. In our modern religious language we often speak of "advancing" or "building up" the Kingdom by means of missionary and social work; and this mode of thought may be partly justified by the attitude of Jesus Himself. He required that men should put themselves in readiness to welcome the Kingdom. He took for granted that by all service in His cause they would prepare the way for the great manifestation of Divine power. But His idea has in some respects been obscured and distorted by our modern interpretations. It is commonly assumed, more or less consciously, that men themselves must bring the Kingdom into being. The very programme of Christianity, as it is often understood in our days, is to establish the Kingdom of God on earth by the concerted effort of all

good men. To Jesus this conception would have been meaningless, and even repellent. The Kingdom, as He knew it, was God's, and men could no more establish it than they could make the sun rise in heaven. To keep this clear in our minds is vital for our whole understanding of Jesus. His attitude was always that of waiting upon God, of trust in a Divine power and wisdom which are working on our behalf, and will accomplish for us what we cannot do ourselves.¹

Still, even if human effort and righteousness could not assist in bringing or in developing the Kingdom of God, Our Lord at least taught that they could prepare souls for the Kingdom of God. Deeds of kindness, He declared, would elicit kindness in response. He bade His hearers let their light so shine before men that they might be drawn to glorify their Father in Heaven. His disciples were to preach the good news that the Kingdom was coming, and at the same time urge to the repentance which would qualify for entering it. In enjoining prayer for enemies He implied that intercession for evilly disposed people might be of avail to turn their hearts and so render them less unfit for the higher life. He thus clearly indicated that human action, whether or not it could hasten the Kingdom of God, could at any rate increase the number of souls who would participate in it.

The parables of growth—the Seed Growing Secretly, the Mustard Seed, the Wheat and the Tares, the Leaven—do not in themselves convey the idea of a long period, and it has been maintained that the idea of growth or development is not what is intended by any of them.² Nevertheless growth, the growth of the Kingdom in the society composed of Christ's disciples, is at least implied, however brief in duration that growth was supposed to be, and however unimportant and incidental the allusion to it. And this germinal, but growing, Kingdom of God Jesus must have conceived of as consisting

¹ *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 47, 48.

² H. G. Wood in *Peake's Commentary*: "The emphasis [in the Seed Growing Secretly] falls, not on the gradual character of growth, but on its independence of human willing and desiring when once man has done his part. In the Mustard Seed attention is directed to the immense difference between the beginnings of the Kingdom and its consummation."

in no small measure of human goodness—of the faith and devotion and love for God and man in the hearts of its members. And since these are active qualities and grow not without human effort, it seems unreasonable to deny that Our Lord must have thought of the growth of God's Kingdom as promoted by human volition. Indeed, when, as Dr. Scott allows, He intimated that prayer and repentance and longing might hasten its approach, He did virtually say that human agency constituted one of the factors of its realization, more especially since repentance is, as well as contrition for the past, still more, good resolution for the future and the start of a moral transformation.

As Dr. Scott also suggests, Jesus regarded His own death as instrumental in the accomplishment of the Divine purpose for the world. It was a "ransom" from evil and therefore a condition of the attainment of good, good which led up to and culminated in life in the Kingdom of God. According to St. John, Jesus conceived of Himself as drawing men through His death, or, as some would interpret it, through the exaltation consequent upon His death, to Himself and therefore to God and into the Kingdom of God. According to this line of interpretation, the sacrifice of Christ would attract men in an analogous manner, however much more potently and effectively, to that in which His disciples might attract them by deeds of mercy. St. Paul, it may be noted in passing, seems to speak of his own sufferings as somehow supplementing those of Christ (Col. i. 24). This, of course, is not to rule out another way of conceiving of the Atonement.

All this is quite consistent with Our Lord's words: "It is My Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." If man does his part by cultivating in himself the righteousness which God requires, then God will do His part by providing the conditions of living suitable to His redeemed children. Certainly God helps men to do and to become as He would have them; but this is not without their volition, their strenuous and devoted strivings, and it is these which constitute the

indispensable contribution which they have to render to the establishment and development of the Kingdom of God in the world. It was apparently the failure or refusal of men to do as Jesus bade them that prevented the Kingdom of God from coming as rapidly as at the commencement of His ministry He had hoped it would.

But what was to be God's contribution to this end, apart from the bestowal of spiritual aid to them in their moral and religious endeavours? That the abolition of satanic or demonic influence was the beginning or part of the beginning of it, is suggested more than once, for instance by this saying: "If I by the finger of God cast out devils, then is the Kingdom of God come upon you." The brief parable that follows, the Strong Man Armed, who is only dispossessed by one still mightier, points in the same direction. Again, when the Seventy returned with the triumphant news that even the devils were subject to them in His Name, He said exultingly: "I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning" (Luke x. 18—Moffatt). The cure of bodily disease He probably thought of as also a conquest of Satan (Luke xiii. 16), and therefore a factor in the coming of the Kingdom. But all this was only the very beginning of the Kingdom of God. How Our Lord conceived of its further stages we can hardly presume to conjecture; except that we may suppose that He looked for a glorious transformation of the earth, a removal of the barrier between this world and the heavenly world, and some time also the ending of death, which according to St. Paul is the last enemy to be destroyed. Such were to be God's gifts to the race of men.

It is because the Kingdom of God is so inconceivably wonderful that we must think of it as given by God rather than as made by men. But that does not warrant us in denying that human beings have any share in its establishment and development. They have at least to make themselves ready, both individually and socially, for receiving and living in the Kingdom—of course, not without Divine aid. Their contribu-

tion to the final result, however small compared to God's, is for them great and difficult enough. It is only through the co-operation of God and His children that His ideal for the world can be realized. Such appears to be Our Lord's thought in its wider implications.

But is it not granted to men to partake, not only in the transformation of themselves, but in that of the world also, to meet the requirements of their expanding life? We read that the disciples were given power to exorcise demons and cure diseases. In recent centuries it has been vouchsafed to man to achieve considerable alleviations and improvements in the conditions of his existence. Plagues have been brought under control, medicine and surgery have found means of prolonging the lives of many, the surface of the globe has been made to yield more abundant produce, communications have been vastly accelerated and extended, knowledge of the Universe has been enlarged in numerous directions, education has been extended and developed. In so far as these changes have made man's environment more favourable to man's life as God wishes it to be, may not we count them as stages, even though very primitive stages, in the formation and growth of the Kingdom of God? Here, too, man has been privileged, not only to receive at God's hands, but also to construct and adapt through his own intelligence and effort, as God has inspired him.

Yet all these amenities of advancing civilization are given to us more than we are apt at first to recognize. In the application of radium to medicine, and the ether to the transmission of messages, we are but making use of mysterious entities woven into the marvellously intricate texture of Nature. They are not in one sense new gifts, since they have been there for man to take since man began to be. So it may be with what we may call man's future heavenly conditions and environment; they await his spiritual readiness to receive them and his spiritual ability to appropriate them. In any case, the doctrine that God's Kingdom is God's gift is not

intended to depreciate or discourage human effort. It is rather intended to assure men that their life as God's children will not be limited by the structure of His Universe; but that He has the power and will to bestow upon them, as they become fit and capable of receiving it, measure after measure of His infinite glory.

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CHAPTER IX

SELF AND OTHERS

THE words "selfish" and "unselfish" are of very frequent occurrence in modern talk, especially when it moralizes. It may even be said that modern moralizing, at least of the more popular order, revolves about the ideas which these words represent. Sin is regarded as mainly, if not wholly, consisting in selfishness; and goodness in unselfishness. And yet these words do not occur in the Bible—at least not in the Authorized or Revised Translations.

But surely the ideas are there, though not definitely expressed. The word "merciful" in the English Versions—which now perhaps would more naturally be "compassionate"—conveys much of what we mean by "unselfish". Selfishness is reprimanded in the reply of Abraham to Dives in hell: "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented". Dives is being made to realize the implication of the doctrine of each for himself, as it affects a person in distress. The logical basis of unselfishness—namely, that the welfare of any other is of equal moment with the welfare of the agent—John Stuart Mill found, as he thought, clearly expressed in the Gospel, and identified it with the principle of his ethical creed: "To do as one would be done by, and to love one's neighbour as oneself, constitute the ideal perfection of utilitarian morality."¹ Yet of course "love" signifies very much more than unselfishness.

To some extent what we mean by "selfish" and "selfishness" is covered in the Bible by the words "proud" and "pride". For the proud man is one who acts in disregard of the welfare of his neighbours. "The proud doer"; "The proud are risen against me"; "The proud have digged pits for me"; "The proud have laid a snare for me"; "The wicked in his pride

¹ *Utilitarianism*.

doth persecute the poor"; "Thou shalt hide me from the pride of men"; "Let not the foot of pride come against me": these phrases from the Psalms indicate that the proud man is one who, obsessed with his own importance and contemptuous of the worth of others, ill-treats them for his own material advantage. In the Prophets of Israel and in the New Testament pride is viewed rather as a defiance of God and therefore as an object of His wrath. But this defiance consisted largely in wrongful treatment of other people. The proud is represented as the oppressor of the poor and lowly; in fact, as the man who carries unselfishness to the point of destructive interference with those unable to defend themselves.

The connection between selfishness and pride is obvious. In order to ill-treat or neglect another, preferring a small advantage for oneself to a comparatively great advantage for him, one must consider oneself superior and him inferior. A high opinion of oneself and a low opinion of another is the logical implication and the requisite intellectual support of what appears to an impartial observer very unfair and cruel conduct. To prefer oneself to others in practice both conditions and is conditioned by a preference of oneself to others in theory. It is true that in the Old Testament the proud is rather the active sinner who does positive harm, than the negative sinner who refuses to help. But Our Lord seems to connect the pride of the rich and the national authorities with their neglect of the woeful plight of the poor and ignorant. Surely there was pride in Dives, by which he attempted to justify his neglect of Lazarus; and also in the Scribes and Pharisees, who took so little trouble to guide and enlighten the outcasts and the masses of the nation—the publicans and sinners and the '*Am-ha-Aretz*.'¹ And as pride incites to the selfishness both of cruel oppression and callous neglect, so does humility promote the unselfishness of justice and mercy and humility, which Jesus called the "weightier matters of the law".

¹ See Note p. 168.

It used to be one of the great problems of ethics, how to derive altruism from egoism, both theoretically, so as to convince the cynic, and also practically, so as to induce a confirmed egoist to care for the needs of his fellow-creatures. One of the classical discussions on this subject is that given by Bishop Butler, who argued that self-love is far from being the sole impulse in the constitution of man, but that there exists a variety of "particular appetites and affections", each with an object distinct from that of personal welfare, and that benevolence is one of them. Self-love, he maintained, requires particular passions, since without them there could be no satisfaction or happiness.

So that if self-love wholly engrosses us, and leaves no room for any other principle, there can be absolutely no such thing at all as happiness, or enjoyment of any kind whatever; since happiness consists in the gratification of particular passions, which supposes the having of them. Self-love, then, does not constitute *this* or *that* to be our interest or good; but, our interest or good being constituted by Nature and supposed, self-love only puts us upon obtaining and securing it.

Benevolence he regarded as one among these particular passions, and as such having no more contrariety to self-love than the others; in fact, less so than some.

This competition . . . happens much oftener between pride, revenge, sensual gratifications, and private interest than between private interest and benevolence.¹

There is much truth in this, and yet it can hardly be said to constitute the last word on the subject. For the sort of instinctive benevolence which yields immediate gratification, and which self-love is likely to approve on that account, is, to say the least, not the only form of altruism required by the moral ideal. We look for a direction of the will to another's welfare, equally deliberate with its direction to one's own welfare, and independent of any proof that can be offered that such unselfishness will ultimately benefit or profit the doer of it. Benevolence that is satisfying and delightful is of

¹ Sermon XI.

indubitable value; but this easy kind-heartedness is promoted by unselfish acts which are not easy and appear at the moment to reduce and impair the agent's happiness. On the other hand, Bishop Butler elsewhere does seem to put self-love and benevolence on a level, thereby implying that the latter can and should be deliberate.

Herbert Spencer attacked the question of egoism versus altruism in his *Data of Ethics*. He had no difficulty in showing that, though "egoism precedes altruism in order of imperativeness",¹ nevertheless altruism is in life from the beginning, namely in parenthood; and, as life progresses, in the subordination of the individual to the family and the tribe. In various ways, he pointed out, altruism ministers to the security and happiness of the individual, not least by providing the alternation requisite to enable the faculties to function vigorously.

The law that function entails waste, and that faculties yielding pleasure by their action cannot act incessantly without exhaustion and accompanying satiety, has the implication that intervals during which altruistic activities absorb the energies are intervals during which the capacity for egoistic pleasure is recovering its full degree. The sensitiveness to purely personal enjoyments is maintained at a higher pitch by those who minister to the enjoyments of others than it is by those who devote themselves wholly to personal enjoyments.

He well remarks that "men live afresh in their children", thus altruistically renewing the zest of childhood and youth.² The ultimate synthesis of egoism and altruism he foresaw in a state of society in which each is careful to give opportunities of altruism to others.

Altruistic competition, first reaching a compromise under which each restrains himself from taking an undue share of altruistic satisfactions, eventually rises to a conciliation under which each takes care that others shall have their opportunities for altruistic satisfactions: the highest altruism being that which ministers, not to the egoistic satisfactions of others, but also to their altruistic satisfactions.³

Herbert Spencer has the advantage over Bishop Butler in distinguishing primitive impulses into self-regarding and

¹ § 74.

² *Data of Ethics*, § 80.

³ *Ibid.*, § 97.

other-regarding, and in thus being able to found both egoism and altruism on a natural, sub-human basis. On the other hand, Bishop Butler takes better account than does Herbert Spencer of rational and deliberate choice as standing over the "particular passions" and estimating and utilizing them, though he fails to appreciate sufficiently the deliberate benevolence which may oppose and dominate both the particular passions and self-love itself. We ought to distinguish the natural altruism inherent in certain instincts—particularly the parental and the sexual—from the conscious and deliberate altruism which should actuate rational beings such as we reckon ourselves to be. This does not imply that the deliberate altruism of rational choice could have come into being without the unreflecting altruism of the primitive instincts; still less that the former does not still derive much of its force and persistence from the latter. But it does mean that it belongs to man as a rationally autonomous being to promote another's welfare as an intrinsically valuable object in itself. There is an analogous relation of the instinct of curiosity to the pursuit of the higher mathematics.

The calculating self-love that excludes or attempts to exclude all consideration for others, except as ministering to the agent's welfare, is far from being natural. It is rather an artificial product of a perverted civilization, involving an unnatural atrophy or suppression of altruistic inclinations. Nor is the theory tenable that one can only care for the welfare of another if one imagines that other as in some sense a part of one's own life or personality, or as a member of the social organism in which one's personality is extended. No doubt that feeling of mutual dependence and co-consciousness promotes benevolence and the desire to help. But even if we supposed that someone whom by a little effort and sacrifice we could deliver from an awful fate will never be met by us again, in this world or in another, we should—most of us, to say the least—try to save him.

The condition for an altruistic impulse appears to be not

so much, or not only, the consciousness of belonging to the same social group as the person to be helped, but very largely sympathy. If we sympathize with another we are prone to conceive a benevolent impulse towards him. I use "sympathy" here in Dr. McDougall's manner, not as in itself involving tender emotion, but simply as a consciousness of the conscious states of another. The reflection in imagination of another's joys and sorrows, aspirations and disappointments and achievements, provides a field for the altruistic instincts to cover. If one can conjure up concretely the emotions of another, one is much more apt to be distressed at his misfortunes and to desire his good fortune and so to make efforts to assist him.¹

If, then, there meets us an egoist who maintains that all he cares for or ought to care for is his own welfare, we may first endeavour to show him that selfishness involves narrowness, and as time goes on dreariness and deadness, whereas sympathetic unselfishness leads to the broadening of interests and the heightening of vitality.² Apart from the fact that he is more likely to receive help and sympathy in return for what he gives, the unselfish and sympathetic person has a richer and more abundant life than his opposite. Love affords some of the sweetest experiences in life, even when there is an element in it of self-abasement and self-sacrifice. And if the theoretical egoist can by such arguments be brought to see

¹ Professor W. McDougall, *Introduction to Social Psychology*, 20th edition, p. 79: "The fundamental and primitive form of sympathy is exactly what the word implies, a suffering with, the experiencing of any feeling or emotion when and because we observe in other persons or creatures the expression of that feeling or emotion." *Ibid.*, p. 69: "According to the view here adopted, the element of pain in pity is sympathetically induced pain, and the element of sweetness is the pleasure that attends the satisfaction of the impulse of the tender emotion."

² Cp. Bishop Butler, Sermon XI, § 9: "Surely that character we call selfish is not the most promising for happiness. . . . Immoderate self-love does very ill consult its own interest." Similarly Herbert Spencer, *Data of Ethics*, p. 214: "Pure egoism, even in its immediate results, is less successfully egoistic than is the egoism duly qualified by altruism, which, besides achieving additional pleasures, achieves also, through raised vitality, a greater capacity for pleasures in general."

that he can only get the best for himself by ceasing to prefer the best for himself, we can then instruct him concerning the parental instinct within him, which, however much suppressed, is probably ineradicable in the soul. Methods must then be suggested for arousing it; for instance, by friendship with children and services to people in distress. He must be taught that to get he must give, to find he must lose, to live he must die. Egoism, being self-contradictory, must be led to commit suicide, or rather so to mortify itself that it will be transformed into a love of self for the sake of others, a desire to take his share both in the weal and in the woe of mankind for the benefit of the whole society of God's children, of which he is born a member. The doctrine of egoism is neither ethically nor psychologically sound, nor is it a feasible rule of living. It must wither under the breath of philosophy and science, and will consume itself in the solitariness and torment which are its inevitable attendants.

All this appears in accordance with the teaching and example of Our Lord. In His own conduct and disposition He manifested strong altruistic impulses and seemed to expect others to do the same. We see this in His tender affection towards children and in His overflowing compassion for the miserable. He called for mercy and pity and kindness as being well within the power of ordinary people to feel and practise. At the same time, He exalted love into a definite principle of action: "Love thy neighbour as thyself." He spoke of love, not as a difficult achievement, to be prepared for by prolonged discipline and education, but as an activity wholly natural to and within the power of human nature. Perhaps He would have admitted that to love one's neighbour equally with oneself, or to love one's enemy, was not at once possible for sin-ridden men—not until they had received the Holy Spirit from their Heavenly Father. But some degree of love almost anyone might have. Even sinners, He said, loved and did good to those that loved and did good to them. This, He implied, would develop in those who also set themselves to

love God. In His appeals for love He spoke acceptably to the best of His contemporaries, though He extended the duty of loving farther than they were accustomed to. But that men might and ought to love, regarding the welfare of others as equally to be desired and sought for with the welfare of the agents, was an axiom which both Jesus and the great Rabbis had in common.

But did He teach or imply, or are we to believe in, complete impartiality, not only between self and others, but between the others among themselves? We here approach what I incline to regard as the most difficult problem in practical ethics. To begin with, I doubt whether the parable of the Good Samaritan is directly intended to teach that anyone is the neighbour of anyone. It seems rather to have been directed to convince the questioning Scribe that the neighbours of any individual Jew might include some of another nation—in particular, a foreigner who has done him a noble deed of kindness. The Samaritan *became* (such is the Greek word literally) the neighbour of the Jew by rescuing his life, probably at some risk to his own, and by his subsequent trouble and generosity on his behalf.

Yet it is to be noted that Our Lord concluded the talk with the words: "Go and do thou likewise." This was as much as to say that people should use opportunities of making neighbours whom they should thenceforth love on equal terms. The doctrine that the weal and woe of all people are intrinsically of equal importance, or are so approximately equal that they are to be deemed equal for practical purposes, is to be inferred rather from what Jesus said or implied as to the exceeding value of each individual human soul: "How much is a man better than a sheep!" At the same time He indicated that allowance must be made for the unequal importance of different individuals at any particular time, in respect of their probable influence on their surroundings. Thus, to illustrate this last point, He did not behave as if it were equally urgent to enlighten with the Gospel and to

cure of disease any and every person in the world; for He devoted His energies more to the Jews than to the Gentiles, and more to His intimate disciples than to the populace. Similarly, we may suggest, it may be right to prefer the well-being of a great physician to the well-being of one of his patients, since the health and life of more depend upon the former than upon the latter.

But interpreting the principle of equal love for all with this obvious qualification, are we to act on the assumption that the welfare of the most remote and unknown of the inhabitants of the earth is of no more and no less consequence than that of one of our own nearest and dearest? To take a concrete instance, should I deny to my own child a holiday by the sea needed for his convalescence after a serious illness, so as to provide through some charitable agency for medical treatment for an unknown Chinese child in a still worse state of health? I may reply that even granting that the recovery of the Chinese child is as important for mankind as that of my own, still disappointment and grievance at my refusing my own child what natural affection demands, would constitute a worse wound to love and therefore set back human progress more than my refusal to give this charitable aid to a distant stranger. It is not merely bodily health and disease, life and death, that we must take into account, but still more, the tender growth of personality which thrives by loving care, and wilts and turns bitter by callous neglect, and the more so the closer and stronger the bonds of intimacy.

And it is not only relationships of kinship or affection, but those also of loyalty to a fellowship of which we are members, such as native country, church, society for some special object, and also those of contract or agreement, either explicit or understood, which require us to prefer the apparently lesser good of one to the greater good of another. Thus, if I have agreed to perform a certain task on a certain day, even though it be not very important in itself, the breach of faith involved in neglecting it would probably outweigh the good I

should do by spending the day in a visit to a sick stranger. Similarly, refusal to pay a debt even to a rich man would not be excusable by the donation of an equal sum to charity, still less a fraud against the same. The bonds, whether natural or contractual, consisting of kinship or of friendship or of loyalty or of promises, whether or not they increase the value of the services rendered in their name, do enormously increase the detriment of the omission of those services, because this omission wounds and rends the fibres of personality whereby the lives of individuals are intertwined.

Yet it does not follow that no obligation, whether of love or of compact, is ever to be set aside for the sake of a service to a casual stranger. One would feel it one's duty to save a drowning child fallen into a pond by the roadside, even if this meant missing an important business engagement to which one was solemnly pledged, thereby perhaps causing financial loss to one's family. The difficulty is to formulate any sort of rule for determining the point at which what we may call "obligation" must yield to "charity" and vice versa, or for estimating one in terms of the other. The best we seem able to do at present is to point out that there are occasions when most would agree that either must override the other, and to leave it to the individual to make the right decision in the particular instance by means of his own judgment and conscience and inspiration. Our Lord was faced with the necessity of making moral decisions of this kind, as when He withdrew from His preaching and healing in order to prepare Himself and His disciples for a further stage in His Ministry, and yet was once momentarily deflected from that by the importunity of the Syro-Phœnician woman. We may say, in general, that it is right sometimes to prefer the lesser advantage of one to whom one is bound with intimate ties of loyalty or affection to the greater advantage of a stranger, and this is wholly consistent with what appears to be quite axiomatic, namely, that the right course of conduct is always that which will produce, or appears likely to produce, the

maximum good result on the whole. The explanation is this, that not to help the former would cause evil much greater than the good which would ensue from helping the latter, whereas not to help the latter causes only a relatively small amount of evil.

We may try to elucidate the problem by reference to recent history. The European war of 1914 to 1918 was followed by a series of heart-rending national calamities: the under-feeding of a large portion of the population of Austria, resulting in wizened and tuberculous children; the enormous Russian famine; the homeless destitution of refugees in the Near East. Towards the relief of all this misery people in this country contributed in the course of six years, as far as I can gather, less than four millions of pounds. The following propositions are hardly dubitable: first, that much suffering and mortality would have been averted if the charity had been very much more abundant; secondly, that at least a hundred times the amount might have been given without taking from the necessities of life;¹ thirdly, that Jesus, as we may infer from His teaching on generosity and kindness in general, and on love and succour for enemies in particular, would have enjoined, or even commanded us, to give far more than we did. I confess that nothing in my experience, so much as the almost universal callousness of the civilized world in this respect, has ever made me so inclined to echo the words quoted by St. Paul from the Psalms: "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God; they have all turned aside, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good. No, not one!" There were scarcely any, except those who actually jeopardized and in some cases sacrificed their lives in

¹ The expenditure in the United Kingdom on alcoholic liquor alone amounted to over 1,800 million pounds during those six years, and there were other big extravagances. If all except a few in highly responsible positions had reduced their domestic expenditure to the level of the average of that of the families of unskilled labourers, it is probable that a thousand times the amount actually given would have been available.

the actual famine areas, who manifested by their actions that they realized the terrible moral import of the situation. If a man enjoying a prolonged dinner knew that a child was dying of hunger just outside the wall of his house or restaurant, supposing he refused to give up as much as a single course to save the child's life, what should we think of him? And yet what ethical difference does it make whether the starving child is ten yards or ten thousand miles away? The little one's woeful plight is just as much a fact, terrible and poignant and pregnant with possibilities of immense evil and good. In a way I can excuse a murderer more readily, seeing that he is probably driven by some overpowering passion. But this cold-blooded letting the children languish and die, in preference to giving up some small superfluous comfort or amusement, letting them miserably and pitifully die—filthy, chill, hungry, forlorn, weakly sobbing, with drawn faces, mutely appealing eyes—

And yet none of the churches or religious parties—those which stressed sacraments and those which stressed faith, those which believed stoutly in the literal record of the Bible and those which were liberal in their views, ritualist and evangelical, orthodox and modernist—none of them uplifted their voice to proclaim the clear right and wrong, the love and cruelty, of the matter. Those who came nearest in these emergencies to what I cannot but believe would have been Christ's command were the Quakers, who, be it remarked, emphasize His moral teaching and believe very strongly in the constant working of the Holy Spirit among them. It is also fair to add that the American nation contributed more than all the other nations put together, both in the relief of the Russian famine and in medical and hospital assistance in the Near East, to Armenians and others. It would have been possible—at least in the case of the refugee Greeks in Macedonia—to have sent out from this country some thousands of builders to erect houses with all possible speed, some hundreds of doctors and nurses with up-to-date hospital equipment,

great masses of warm clothing from the accumulations in shops and warehouses, and abundance of the best food available. So we should have acted towards these refugees, as we should wish others to act towards us if we and our children fell into similar misery—hunger, cold, the menace of death from pneumonia and starvation and frost. Nothing short of that would have been really Christian.

Another aspect of this inhumanity is worth remarking—the lack of womanliness in the women of Christendom. For if womanliness does not mean a tender heart to the appeal of babes and children, what does it mean of value? One might have hoped that the spirit of maternity, at least in the wealthier and more educated and intelligent of the women of the nation, would have insisted on a great and generous response to the cry of the children.

England, England!
Why are these children dead?

What if my hands be red,
Yet my fame is bright.
For I rose in the height
Of my power; none stayed me, nor prevented.
The terror-stricken world assented,
And I slew them in their thousands; they are dead.

England, England!
In my ears there lives the cry
Of the mothers half demented
Who have seen their children die
England, England!
Why are these children dead? ¹

And yet such a wholesale condemnation of Christians would not be altogether fair; for it would be tantamount to ignoring the vast amount of charity and kindness and self-sacrifice among high and low—acts of mercy to kindred and friends and neighbours, lives devoted to the alleviation of poverty and ill-health and the uplift of depressed classes and

¹ Eglantyne Jebb, *The Real Enemy*, p. 28.

peoples both at home and abroad, the faithful performance of duty year after year by social worker and civil servant and religious minister, with little apparent response or progress. It would also be to ignore deeds of splendid heroism, in accidents and disasters and the perils of both war and peace.

The fact is, not that the vast majority of people are very good, nor that they are very bad, but that they are very limited. Many are very good within narrow limits, moderately good within wider limits, and callous and heartless beyond. As the philosopher Henri Bergson said with reference to the Great War, that instruments had become too powerful for the intelligent beings who operated them, with the result that they were hurting and destroying themselves; so it appears that the material aspects of civilization—its science, its commercial and financial organization—have greatly outpaced in growth the moral aspects.¹ Human nature has not yet developed its moral sense and sympathetic imagination so as to feel much pity for unknown and distant strangers in their woes and agonies, and therefore is not prompt to make sacrifices on their behalf. There has arisen a situation very different from that which existed when the obligations to charity and benevolence were first declared in various peoples before Christ or even in New Testament times. The vast impersonal charity which is needed to correspond with the vast impersonal relationships of modern civilization, if man is not to be chargeable with appalling selfishness, has been developing but slowly, much more slowly than the material power to which it is appropriate. As Mr. G. F. Wates well puts it: "Our

¹ "Life and Matter at War", by Henri Bergson, *Hibbert Journal*, April 1915, p. 473: "Each new machine being for man a new organ—an artificial organ which merely prolongs the natural organs—his body became suddenly and prodigiously increased in size, without his soul being able at the same time to dilate to the dimensions of his new body. From this disposition there issued the new problems, moral, social, international, which most of the nations endeavoured to solve by filling up the soulless void in the body politic, by creating more liberty, more fraternity, more justice than the world had ever seen." These are supposed to be the reflections of a philosopher in the future on the world at the time of the Great War.

wonderful machinery of transport, combined with the yet more wonderful developments of electrical forces, have made the world one neighbourhood. With good will our power to help one another is far greater than ever before.”¹ But the moral implications of this neighbourhood are very tardily realized; the good will lingers. But if God is as Jesus represents Him, He requires that it shall come. For we “are all His offspring”, and the spaces of the globe do not separate ethically.

But mammon withstands the development of this world-wide charity—mammon narcotizing conscience and compassion, and engendering feverish egotisms and antipathies. Yet, as according to the words of Christ in the Fourth Gospel, the Holy Spirit would, by making plain the moral issues of His death, “convict the world, convincing men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment” (Moffatt), so after these great iniquities of modern times the same Spirit, pointing to the woe and agonies that they have caused, will bring men to perceive these iniquities, to abhor them, and to long and pray for the corresponding virtues. Even now the evil of imperialism as a cause of war is being revealed and reflected upon so as to become a commonplace of popular thought. And as it is being shown that imperialism causes men to slaughter one another and makes women widows and children fatherless; so also will it ere long become apparent that mammon suffocates human mercy, and delivers over friendly and innocent people to deaths of cold and hunger. Under the horrifying pictures of emaciated children and their piles of corpses exhibited in recent years by the organizers of the *Save the Children Fund*, in a pathetically ineffective appeal to Christian charity, might be fittingly inscribed, “The work of mammon.”²

¹ *All for the Golden Age*, p. 86.

² It is only fair in this connection to consider the much more prompt national generosity recently shown towards the families of the workless miners, who for the most part have not come anywhere so near to actual death from starvation and exposure as did vast numbers of Russians and Armenians and various bodies of refugees in the Near East during recent years. This comparison goes to prove that charity in Christendom is, not so much deficient in intensity, as limited in extension.

But while the unfulfilled obligations of the wealthier nations in the face of the recent miseries of their neighbours are apparent on reflection to the enlightened moral consciousness, it is another matter to know what the individual should have done. To repeat the qualification of absolute impartiality contended for above, it can hardly be right for anyone of moderate means to divide his purchasing power of food equally between his own children and thousands of starving children in remote lands. But should not he, after satisfying the immediate and more elementary needs of his own family, if he really aspired to be a disciple of Christ, instead of making occasional donations of a few pounds, have sold out his investments, and with the sum realized have given life and restored health to some hundreds of starving Russians or Armenians, trusting that God would provide for his own children in time to come?

Arguments against his doing this might be imagined as follows: The utmost he could do would be little in comparison with the need, as he could only save the lives of hundreds, when tens of thousands or even millions were dying.—But does the fact that a million perish make the saving of a hundred from an awful death any the less a duty?

Again, others who have smaller responsibilities should give instead, or at any rate take the lead in giving.—But that others fail in their duty does not make one's own duty any less imperative. It is as if, when somebody was drowning and twenty bachelors stood looking on, a married man excused himself on that account for doing the same, while asserting that if he were the only one present he would have dived to the rescue without hesitation.

Again, such heroic generosity, it might be contended, cannot be practised without a special call and grace from Heaven.—But how can God call and inspire those who have hardened their hearts?

Such are some of the aspects of what I regard as the most difficult problem in practical ethics—concerning the rival

claims of personal affection and general human needs. I do not attempt to give any solution of it, though there do seem to be rather indefinite limits which to some extent narrow the field of search. Absolute impartiality as between our nearest and dearest on the one hand and total strangers on the other appears so contrary to nature as to be impracticable, to say the least. But such callous indifference as many estimable people have recently exhibited towards sufferers in remote lands is truly shocking. We may add that in a decently Christian civilization no one would be called upon to decide between his child's education and the life of another child unknown and far away. And we may be confident that in years to come Christians, and indeed all normal humane folk, will express themselves aghast at the inhumanity of this age, as people now read with horror of the cruelties in mine and mill hardly a century ago. For the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto leaven, sanctifying human wills and enlightening human intelligences.

CHAPTER X

MORALIZING THE INSTINCTS

WE cannot afford to overlook psychology, particularly the so-called "new psychology", if we would deal adequately with ethical problems. Now, there has been for some time a succession of philosophers and psychologists who have stressed the importance of unconscious factors in mental processes. Von Hartmann with his "philosophy of the unconscious", Frederic Myers with his theory of the subliminal self, the great hypnotist Pierre Janet, all helped to prepare the way for Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, for whom the *libido*, the flaming passion of life, is the principal motive-force of the human personality.

It is not the place here to discuss the theories of these pioneers of the new psychology, which, though undoubtedly calling attention to certain facts in the psychic constitution of man, yet attempt to degrade some of the noblest elements in human life, such as parental and filial affection, art, and religion. It will, I think, be more profitable to pass at once to consider another tendency of modern psychology, in part derived from the Freudian doctrine, yet in some ways opposed to it, that which investigates and emphasizes the instincts. The hidden source of conscious life appears, according to this school of thought, to be, not one unconscious force, but many unconscious forces. The soul is at root a multiplicity, rather than a unity, however much intertwined the multiple factors may be. Unsatisfactory though this theory may be as a complete account of the human soul, yet it proves very useful as a working hypothesis, helping towards the solution of many psychological problems, and being of great practical avail in mental and moral therapeutics and education.

What, then, is an instinct, and what are the instincts? Professor McDougall defines instinct in the following terms:—

We may define an instinct as an inherited innate psycho-physical disposition which determines its possessor to perceive and to pay attention to objects of a certain class, to experience an emotional excitement of a particular quality upon perceiving such an object, and to act in regard to it in a particular manner, or, at least, to experience an impulse to such action.¹

He claims to have distinguished at least thirteen main instincts, most of them connected with special emotions. The instincts and their proper emotions are as follows:—

- (1) The instinct of flight and the emotion of fear.
- (2) The instinct of repulsion and the emotion of disgust.
- (3) The instinct of curiosity and the emotion of wonder.
- (4) The instinct of pugnacity and the emotion of anger.
- (5) The instinct of self-abasement or subjection and the emotion of subjection, sometimes called “negative self-feeling”.
- (6) The instinct of self-assertion or self-display and the emotion of elation, sometimes called “positive self-feeling”.
- (7) The parental instinct and the tender emotion, commonly called “love”.

Then there are other instincts with less well-defined emotional tendency, viz.:—

- (8) The instinct of reproduction.
- (9) The gregarious instinct.
- (10) The instinct of acquisition.
- (11) The instinct of construction.

In his *Outline of Psychology* Dr. McDougall distinguishes also these:—

- (12) The food-seeking instinct.
- (13) The instinct of appeal, manifested particularly by the young in calling for their parents.

¹ *Introduction to Social Psychology*, 20th edition, p. 25.

He thinks that there are also other instincts, of a minor order, of which he specifies that of laughter.

Other psychologists have drawn up different tables or schemes. Dr. Drever, for instance, distinguishes between "appetite tendencies" and "instinct tendencies", each of which classes he subdivides into "general" and "specific", according as they have not, or have, definite objects. The specific "appetite tendencies" are hunger, thirst, sleep, sex; the specific "instinct tendencies" are fear, anger, hunting, acquisition, curiosity, gregariousness, courtship, self-display, self-abasement, the parental instinct. The one general "appetite tendency", according to this psychologist, is the seeking of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. There are several general "instinct tendencies": play (which Dr. McDougall will not allow to be an instinct), experimentation (which Dr. Drever thinks includes "constructiveness"), imitation, sympathy, suggestibility (all three not considered to be instincts by Dr. McDougall).¹

Dr. Rivers has classified the instincts under another set of headings: "Those of self-preservation; those which subserve the continuance of the race; and those which maintain the cohesion of the group." But, as he proceeds to observe, "there are no sharp lines between these three varieties of instinct, and in many instinctive reactions more than one variety is involved".² The instinct of acquisition, for example, though derived from that of self-preservation, functions in connection with those of sex and parenthood and the herd.

All this analysis and classification of the instincts of human nature represents a substantial advance of knowledge. Yet the summary statements just quoted indicate a science in its infancy. Several criticisms seem called for.

In the first place, the manner in which Dr. McDougall represents the instincts as all co-ordinate or equally fundamental is surely misleading. It is like giving a list of the branches of a tree without explaining what one means by a branch or saying

¹ *Instinct in Man*, pp. 168 ff.

² *Instinct and the Unconscious*, p. 51.

which of the branches spring from the same fork. There appear to be special affinities in Dr. McDougall's list; for instance, between self-assertion and pugnacity, and between acquisition and food-seeking. Dr. Rivers, on the other hand, is more inclined to recognize that some instincts spring out of others.

Secondly, more distinction should be made between the instincts which constitute the more constant sources or channels of psychic energy, and those which rather resemble springs which only act when touched, or subsidiary channels which are filled only in special emergencies. The parental instinct seems to belong to the former class; that of repulsion to the latter. For people are conscious of craving for a child to love and care for, but do not lament the lack of something to be disgusted with.

Thirdly, the attempt to bring all affection under the parental instinct is not convincing. What of the affection of children for their parents, the affection of husband and wife, of friends, of the patriot for his country? Considering the importance of the "tender emotion" from very lowly to the loftiest stages in life, we might reasonably expect a more thorough treatment of it than most of these psychologists have offered us.

Fourthly, what of beauty? To some degree doubtless it is connected with sexuality. But the glories of sunrise and sunset, the dancing of the daffodils, "all the shade and the shine of the sea", "the wailful sweetness of the violin"—are their appeal and the joy they bring due merely to elaborations of the mating instinct?

Fifthly, some of these psychologists have not shown themselves sufficiently aware that all the sundry instincts appear to spring from a primary instinct or urge to life, to its maintenance and expansion. The derivative instincts serve the purpose of inducing the creature to provide for its several needs or for the needs of its race, automatically, so to speak, to flee from danger, to destroy enemies, to lay up stores of food, to propagate its kind. But the primary instinct comes to clear consciousness in man and prompts, by the agency of intelligent

foresight, to doing that to which the derivative instincts impel. Thus, even without any feeling of fear, one avoids obvious dangers in order to remain alive and unhurt. Similarly, one would lay by money with a view to escaping starvation and disabling want, even if one experienced no acquisitive impulse. On the other hand, the instincts influence behaviour independently of vital needs, even after their utility has passed away; as when a passion for hunting causes a business man to seek his recreation in sport. All this suggests that the instincts might be, not only regulated, but also increased or reduced, according as reason shows to be desirable, for an independently conceived ideal of life.

This brings us to the sixth count in the criticism—namely, that we must allow a higher function to reason than that of merely facilitating the operation of the instincts, but recognize that in man it can and should choose the main object or motive of action. Dr. McDougall discusses the question what it is that enables a moral sentiment to overcome a violent instinctive desire. He will not allow it to be reason, but decides that it is “an impulse awakened within the sentiment of self-regard. It is the desire that I, the precious self, that being which I conceive proudly or humbly, more or less truly, and more or less clearly, according to the development of my powers, the desire that this self shall realize in action the ideal of conduct which it has formulated and accepted.”¹ That the self-assertive or self-regarding instinct does thus fortify moral endeavour is an important truth in moral psychology. But we have still to ask how any “ideal of conduct” comes to be accepted. Is it because it is seen to be that which will give most satisfaction to all the instincts, or is it because it commends itself to reason, to rational or spiritual insight, as that which will most effectively conduce to the maximum of good, conceived of in terms of conscious life? Surely it belongs to the greatness of man, both to perceive an objective ideal of good and to direct his energies to its realization.

¹ *Outline of Psychology*, pp. 440, 441.

Having indulged in these criticisms and suggestions, we may proceed to consider what more these psychologists have to teach. One very important branch of this science concerns the tendency of the instincts to attach themselves to definite objects, to make for themselves definite channels, to form what are technically known as "sentiments". Dr. McDougall attributes the discovery of sentiments to Mr. A. F. Shand:—

Mr. Shand points out that our emotions, or, more strictly speaking, our emotional dispositions, tend to become organized in systems about the various objects and classes of objects that excite them. Such an organized system of emotional tendencies is not a fact or mode of experience, but is a feature of the completely organized structure of the mind that underlies all our mental activity. To such an organized system of emotional tendencies Mr. Shand proposes to apply the name "sentiment". . . . That, in spite of the great amount of discussion of the affective life in recent centuries, it should have been reserved for a contemporary writer to make this very important discovery is an astonishing fact, so obvious and so necessary does the conception seem when once it has been grasped.¹

Dr. McDougall elsewhere gives this definition: "A sentiment involves an individual tendency to experience certain emotions and desires in relation to some particular object".²

There are simple sentiments, such as fear of a dog, and complicated sentiments, such as patriotism. Thus Dr. Hadfield, after describing sentiments as psychological constellations, takes this instance: "Patriotism is a constellation in which the emotions are grouped round the idea of our country; we assert ourselves for our country, we fight for her, we feel tenderness towards her, we fear for her, we submit to her demands."³ Thus five instincts—those of escape, of assertion, of submission, the parental, the combative—go to comprise the patriotic sentiment.

Some psychologists, especially the Continental, instead of "sentiment" say "complex". But this term in English writers usually denotes a sentiment which is disliked by the dominant portion of the personality, and is therefore repressed or sup-

¹ *Introduction to Social Psychology*, p. 105.

² *Outline of Psychology*, p. 419.

³ *Psychology and Morals*, p. 20.

pressed as much as possible. The memory of a horrible experience, such as falling over a precipice, or a pleasurable but deleterious object or practice, such as alcoholic drink and indulgence in it, may become the nucleus of a complex. This, though extruded from consciousness, may continue to exist in the unconscious mind and work for evil, causing bad dreams, nervousness, strange fantasies, irresolution, general feebleness, insanity. Dr. Hadfield gives the following definition: "Complexes . . are psychological constellations formed by the attachment of instinctive emotions to objects or experiences presented by the environment, but which, owing to their painful or repugnant character, are unacceptable to the self."¹ "Complexes", he explains, "may be recognized or unrecognized; consciously restrained or unconsciously repressed. The former, the recognized complex, may affect our character and happiness; the latter, the repressed complexes, are alone capable of producing a psycho-neurosis."²

Unspecialized instincts, if abhorred and suppressed, also tend to disturb the conscious life, though perhaps less acutely. Dr. Freud, and those who think with him, have taken much pains to investigate the subconscious workings of the sexual instinct, inclining to attribute almost all mental troubles to its suppression. But other instincts, if denied an outlet, affect and sometimes disturb the conscious existence. Thus the parental instinct in childless people may give rise to strange sentimental attachments, such as extravagant devotion to pets. The balked gregarious instinct is apt to produce acute melancholia. Suppressed combativeness emerges in the form of horse-play and general quarrelsomeness. It is to be further observed that unspecialized instincts, when denied adequate expression, are liable to become specialized on particular objects and so give rise to complexes.

Dr. McDougall would give the term "complex" both to the repressed instinct and to the repressed sentiment, according to the following passage:—

¹ *Psychology and Morals*, p. 24.

² *Ibid.*, p. 26.

That which is repressed is commonly described as a complex. The complex may be a very extensive system of mental dispositions. For example, the repression may be directed against one of the great instincts and all its works, i.e. all its conscious expressions: it may be directed against fear and all manifestations of fear; or against the sex instinct and all its manifestations. Then every memory of experiences inspired by fear, or coloured by sex emotion, and every anticipation or fantasy similarly inspired, falls under the repression. The soldier who has learned to believe that any sign of fear is disgraceful; the saint who retires to the wilderness to meditate on spiritual things and avoid all occasions of lust: these are examples of such general repressions; in both cases the repressed tendency is apt to break through and manifest itself in dreams and perhaps in waking fantasies. . . .

More commonly repression is directed against some particular direction of an impulse, against fear or lust or pride directed to, or inspired by, some particular object or objects, and situations of some special class. In such cases we have to do, not with the repression of an instinct and all its works, but rather with the repression of a sentiment. The sentiment thus repressed may be rudimentary, of very simple constitution, a single instinctive impulse directed upon, fixated upon, a particular object or narrowly defined class of objects with which the subject's acquaintance is very slight. Or the repressed sentiment may be of complex constitution, comprising a number of instinctive tendencies; and the object is then likely to be one with which the subject has a rich and varied acquaintance; as when a man unwittingly develops love for the wife of another, or a sentiment of hatred for some person, such as father or brother, who, according to all his moral training and moral sentiments, should be dear to him.¹

Others belonging to this same school of thought have attended rather to the unity and interconnection of the instincts, emphasizing the conception of the *libido* as the common fount of vitality which energizes the various branches of the psychic constitution. Mr. A. G. Tansley maintains that "in the normal civilized man, who is living comfortably above the margin of subsistence, there is a greater or less amount of free psychic energy available, which can be turned into any suitable conative channel in which he is able to take an interest—his daily work, sport, a hobby, money-making, politics, religion, social activities of various kinds, and so on".² Thus the tension of any instinctive craving may be relieved by strenuous activity of

¹ *Outline of Abnormal Psychology*, pp. 227, 228.

² *The New Psychology and its Relation to Life*, p. 63.

almost any kind. On the other hand, some of the instincts generate a certain amount of *libido* which cannot—at least not without considerable distress—be thus diverted. In fact, the vigorous exercise of one instinct sometimes seems to incite a craving for the vigorous exercise of another, as if to restore the mental equilibrium which one-sided activity has disturbed.

As the child grows up, the instincts become more and more absorbed or utilized in sentiments, and these sentiments become systematized in accordance with the main interests and purposes of the conscious personality. But with a view to happiness and inward peace it is desirable that this system of sentiments should provide frequently recurrent exercise for all the great instincts that are constantly yielding or conducting psychic energy. This object is normally secured fairly well by the alternation of professional work and domestic life and recreation. Holidays are valuable as giving scope for the exercise of instincts and sentiments for which the daily routine provides little or no outlet.

To quote Mr. A. G. Tansley again:—

The principal instincts of the mind normally demand constantly repeated satisfaction, in so far as all the available psychic energy is not absorbed in one integrated higher conation in the service of which the instincts are harnessed, and upon which the whole attention of the mind is concentrated. So far as that is the case there is no room for the independent demands of the individual instincts. Such an ideal subordination and use of instinct is, however, very rarely complete, and so long as it is not complete, the instincts continue to demand independent satisfaction. These demands take the form of what maybe called *recurrent conations*. When the *libido* has gained its immediate end in action, the mind is temporarily satisfied and at rest, but the energy inherent in the living complex ["complex" in the sense of "sentiment" or "system of sentiments"] will shortly accumulate afresh and seek another outlet; and so on indefinitely. The strength of the demand will vary at different times according to the waxing and waning of the energy of the particular complex involved: in some cases the instinct concerned may notably weaken in strength, or almost atrophy, with advancing years, as is sometimes, though not always, the case with the instincts more especially associated with youth, such as the sex instinct and the conative instinct. But apart from such fluctuation or decay, the individual instincts, working through

the corresponding complexes, will demand perpetually renewed satisfaction.¹

What are the practical ethical consequences of all this? In the first place we may gather from this psychology much counsel as to how to deal with refractory impulses and besetting sins. When we find in ourselves an inclination or passion which we have reason to think should not be gratified, whether on moral grounds or any other, the immediate necessity is to resist it. Resistance or repression is the obvious temporary expedient of self-control. But when the obnoxious impulse is deep-rooted and recurrent, more radical treatment is needed, if persistent disturbance and constant struggle is to be avoided. Some other object or objects must be presented, of a beneficent or at least innocuous character, upon which the impulse may expend itself. This is the process known as "diversion", or "sublimation": diversion when the new object is of the same order as the old; sublimation when it is of a less material or sensuous character. Thus it is diversion when an unmarried man transfers his amorous desire from a married woman to an unmarried woman in the hope of marrying her; it is sublimation when he transfers it to art.

When the refractory instinct is intensely specialized and strongly attached to some particular object, the cure is likely to involve much difficulty and anguish. If the repression has been so severe as to cause a complex, the attachment may have to be brought to light by the process known as "psycho-analysis", with or without the aid of an expert or wise friend. For the complex when displayed to view may then be disentangled and broken up. Even when the subject is more or less aware of his trouble, self-examination with dissection of motives helps to elucidate it. The detachment of the impulse from its object may be achieved by bringing to bear upon the object some opposing impulse, which commends itself to reason or conscience as more appropriate. Thus the object of avarice may be shown to be fit for contempt, the object of base

¹ *The New Psychology and its Relation to Life*, p. 70.

passion as fit for honour and the coveted indulgence of the passion as fit for disgust, the object of vindictive hatred as deserving of pity. The negation of the original passion is apt to feel like the excision or rending out of a vital, or at least a valuable, part of oneself. In order to make the cure certain and the recovery rapid, it is important to provide alternative objects with which the balked and wounded impulse may console and perhaps after a while satisfy itself.

We may also learn from the new psychology that variation of activity and experience, giving occasional exercise to all the important factors and aspects in human personality, makes for both sanity and effectiveness. Asceticism has its function in correcting vicious proclivities and disciplining turbulent impulses and refining sensuous inclinations, but it should be an asceticism that is ready to temper its strictness and is directed towards the development of freedom and harmony at a higher level, in which we may receive of "Him who giveth us all things richly to enjoy". And in every life there must be seasons, not only of repose, but also of relaxation and recreation.

All this is taught, directly or by implication, by Our Lord Himself. In the first place, He bids us resist our temptations and repress our wrongful desires. For He endorses the moral laws of Moses and applies them to desire as well as to deed. There is no need to elaborate this.

But what is more remarkable is the frequency with which He enjoins the diversion and sublimation of instincts. He bids men lay up treasures in Heaven instead of on earth; to seek honour of God instead of from men; to fear Him who has the power to cast into hell instead of mortal enemies; to shun defilement of the soul through evil acts and words rather than defilement of the body by the punctilious performance of ceremonial ablutions; to be willing to part from natural kindred with the assurance of finding even in this life plenty of brothers, sisters, mothers, and children (in the ethical meaning of the words) who will satisfy the craving for affectionate intimacy. Christ thus provides for the diversion and sublimation of the

following instincts: of acquisition, of self-assertion, of escape, of repulsion, of gregariousness, of parenthood, and to some extent of sex. We may add that in calling on His disciples to war against the real enemies of man—sins, demons, diseases—he also sublimated the very destructive instinct of combativeness.

In this Our Lord proved Himself a competent moral physician and reformer. He evidently saw that it was not sufficient to declare what man ought and what man ought not to do, what conduct is objectively right and productive of the maximum good, with the due subordination of the welfare of the agent to the welfare of others and the realization of God's ideal. Such instruction, even when supported by promises of Heaven and threats of hell, is apt to be disappointingly ineffective. He perceived the necessity for dealing with moral problems subjectively, indicating how the energies and inclinations inherent in human personality are to be redirected and transmuted.

The instincts of human nature are directed both to personal and to social welfare, and in greatly different proportions in different individuals and in the same individuals at different times. It is normally considered to be a moral gain when anyone becomes less proud of himself or less eager to get wealth for himself and proportionately more proud of and industrious for his native country. On the other hand, socialized instincts may be extremely dangerous and destructive—for instance, national or ecclesiastical arrogance and combativeness. It is noteworthy that Our Lord showed Himself well aware of the need of disciplining socialized instincts when He reprimanded the Jews for their national exclusiveness and urged them to be less resentful to their conquerors.

But it is not practicable wholly to socialize the instincts. The patriot is not likely, in his zeal for his country, to cease to care for his own honour or wealth. Consequently the instincts will still require sublimation in their egoistic form, if the moral character is to grow harmoniously and vigorously. It is possible so to sublimate egoistic impulses that they can be made to

minister, not only to the service of the group to which the agent belongs, but also to the purest altruistic succour and service of anyone and everyone. For example, the acquisitive instinct, being sublimated into the desire for heavenly riches, in the way that Jesus meant, may be harnessed to the unselfish benevolence that promotes the good of another simply for the sake of that other. The sublimation having once taken place, so that the subject has reflected with satisfaction on the prospect of treasures of heaven, the attention can then be diverted towards the needs and welfare of those who are to be benefited by the acts of generosity. The egoistic impulse will continue subconsciously to function and to gratify itself. This may be so, even when the impulse remains in a comparatively crude and materialistic form, but it accords better with a disinterested main object when sublimated or spiritualized. In this way perfect disinterestedness may be compatible with a healthy and satisfying subconscious activity of the instincts in securing personal welfare. As Dr. Hadfield well remarks: "The end determines the quality of the act, whether it is selfish or altruistic."¹

We will investigate the first in the above list of sublimations commended by Our Lord—laying up treasures in Heaven instead of on earth. This is more than a metaphor, and indicates a real transference of the acquisitive instinct from one class of objects to another. This instinct is of fundamental ethical importance since it concerns the accumulation of good or value, or at any rate of the means to good or value. Money and other kinds of material wealth constitute a means to an expanded life of varied experience, which seems good so far as it goes. But, as Jesus pointed out, wealth of this sort suffers from the serious defect that it cannot be retained by the individual after death: "The things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?" As therefore the acquisitive instinct becomes enlightened it will tend to seek permanent kinds of wealth, such as qualities of the soul, certainly moral, and perhaps intellectual and

¹ *Psychology and Morals*, p. 174.

aesthetic qualities and, as Our Lord seems to say in one passage, friendships (Luke xvi. 9). Death then may be used as a criterion of wealth, whereby the acquisitive instinct may be detached from excessive attention to material wealth, and diverted towards wealth of soul, which will henceforth be pursued with the zest that formerly accompanied the accumulation of ordinary property. This sublimation is especially necessary for egoistic acquisitiveness; while socially the augmentation of material wealth appears more reasonable, since society lasts on indefinitely. But there is no fundamental difference. Both for individual and for society such accumulation of wealth is desirable as will best promote in individuals the attainment of value that will survive death. All this, be it remarked, should not cause us to disparage bodily health and vigour and beauty, seeing that these affect the soul and may in some form be carried on into the life beyond.

This sublimation of the acquisitive instinct will probably be found of critical importance for the solution of economic problems and the attainment of social harmony. For it will serve to loosen that tenacious grip of an eager quest for wealth far in excess of personal requirements, which is so productive of waste and resentment and strife, and engender a longing for that real wealth of soul which is won by a generous and social use of money and what money can buy. The power at present misdirected in avarice will then operate mightily for the production of real value both for the individual possessors and for mankind.

We may next consider Our Lord's insistence on the destruction of sinful habits—in psychological language, "complexes": "If thy hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed, rather than having thy two hands to go into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire. And if thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life halt, rather than having thy two feet to be cast into Gehenna. And if thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out: it is good for thee to enter into the Kingdom of God with one eye, rather

than having two eyes to be cast into Gehenna." The surrender of some cherished indulgence or aim, with which powerful instincts have been intertwined, may feel like the severance of a limb or the tearing out of an organ. For these metaphors suggest some violent parting with the sin rather than causing it to decline and atrophy through neglect. The bad habit or project must be, not so much extruded from the mind in an attempt to forget it, but rather made the object, of intense horror and loathing, which, however, should not be prolonged so as to give rise to an obsession. This will cause the instincts to dissociate themselves from it, while some other object should be provided to which they may become attached. This drastic operation requires more courage and costs more pain than the effort merely to suppress the sin; but it is more effective and restorative.

Then we may observe that Our Lord recognized the need, emphasized by modern psychology, for equilibrium and alternation in the exercise of the various factors of conscious life. This is evidenced by His invitation to the disciples to take a holiday from their work: "Come ye apart and rest awhile." We read of Him as journeying outside Palestine and endeavouring, not very successfully, to maintain His incognito, apparently to gather strength for a more difficult phase of His mission. We remark also how the earnestness and passion and sublimity of His discourses are now and again relieved by flashes of wit and humour. He seems at one time to have been a welcome guest in well-to-do households. And there is a poise and gracious ease in His demeanour, bespeaking a well-balanced and harmoniously developed personality. This constitutes part of the charm wherewith He fascinates generation after generation of the race of men.

Finally, Our Lord presents us with a view of human nature free from that artificiality and rigidity and lopsidedness for which we were impelled to criticize some representative psychologists. For instance, He has a truer sense of proportion than to relegate filial devotion to a secondary place, seeing that

this constitutes the very nerve of religion. He saw life steadily and saw it whole; for "He knew what was in man". He gives a paramount position to the instinctive craving for life, as the striking words in St. John bear witness: "I am come that they may have life and have it to the full." He presents an ideal objective good, which both satisfies and transcends reason, and to the realization of which He invites men to devote all their energies, thereby doing the will of God—the good predestined by God for the benefit of all souls, the Kingdom of God, which in its complete fulfilment is God all in all.

CHAPTER XI

CHARACTER AND VIRTUES

I

OUR Lord showed Himself well aware that character produces conduct, especially in the passage in which He warned against false prophets: "By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? No, every good tree bears sound fruit, but a rotten tree bears bad fruit; a good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a rotten tree cannot bear sound fruit. So ye shall know them by their fruit" (partly Moffatt). Apparently He is telling His hearers to observe the private life of those who set themselves up as religious leaders, implying that when a man is off his guard his real character will display itself. There is another saying in which He compares men to vegetable growths: "Every plant which my Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." This also signifies that character is a relatively permanent thing, only that character which is derived from God being good. He also recognizes the fact that character is at first tender and liable to perversions, but in course of time grows strong and invulnerable. Thus He speaks of the terrible fate of those who cause little ones to stumble. Again, at the Last Supper He remarks that Peter is not yet brave enough to declare himself on the side of his Master in the hour of danger, but looks forward to the time when he has "turned again" and will be able to strengthen others.

Yet Jesus is no determinist. He implies that individuals have power to mould their own characters for good or ill, when He declares that a man is defiled by what comes out of him, and when He announces that men will give account for every idle word, apparently referring to the malicious jest that casting out devils was due to alliance with one of the chief devils. He also notices human solidarity in righteousness and sin,

particularly when He speaks of classes and districts and nations as corporately guilty or meritorious.

There is another pregnant and paradoxical saying bearing on the development and disintegration of character: "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath." This occurs, with some variation, twice in St. Matthew, in connection with the reason for teaching in parables and after the parable of the Talents, and once in St. Luke, after the parable of the Pounds, and once in St. Mark, apparently in a collection of isolated sayings.¹ It sounds harsh, not to say cruel, besides conflicting with the Gospel principle that those whose need is greatest should be most helped. Nevertheless, there are some whose slackness and indifference makes it for the present futile to try to help them, and there are others whose devotion to their tasks makes them fit for higher responsibilities. The parables of the Talents and the Pounds refer primarily to tasks or posts or responsibilities in the service of God, but virtually apply also to the abilities requisite for fulfilling and holding these. As we say, "God helps those who help themselves." Moral virtues and all other abilities develop with use, and degenerate with disuse. To be able to do something requiring special skill and knowledge and yet never to do it is for practical purposes equivalent to not being able to do it. And in course of time even the ability will disappear.

The saying mentioned above, in which men or classes of men are compared to plants which God may or may not have planted, evidently alludes to the formation of character through the spiritual influence of God direct on the human soul. This is not a subject upon which Our Lord seems to have spoken very definitely or emphatically. Nevertheless, it is implied necessarily in much that He said—in His teaching on prayer

¹ P. I. Painter attempts to bring out the sense in the last-mentioned passage as follows: "Be careful how you do listen; . . . for if a man is not even master of what he has, he will lose that as well."—*The Man of Nazareth*, p. 151.

and His calling human beings the children of God. A fuller discussion of it will be more in place at a later stage.¹

II

Character is composed of virtues. Since religion and morality were in the ages of Jesus so interwoven, it may be expected that some of the virtues which He stresses will be very largely virtues of the soul in its relation to God. We may commence with that triad which St. Paul regarded as most fundamental in the Christian life—faith, hope, love.

(1) There are marked differences in the connotation of the word "faith" in the different parts of the New Testament. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews alone attempts a definition of it, as being the faculty whereby we foresee our heavenly future and apprehend the invisible world of spirit. St. Paul uses "faith" rather in the sense of trust or belief in a Divine Being, applying it to Abraham believing in the promises of Yahweh, and of the Christian acknowledging and committing himself to Jesus as the Son of God. But Jesus Himself spoke of faith as a function or activity whereby a human being obtains something from God that he wants—as it were, a reaching out at and clutching a spiritual force which he applies to some urgent need or overmastering desire. It is significant that on several occasions Our Lord spoke as if He attributed healing or deliverance of some kind, not so much to God or to Himself, as to the faith of the subject: "Thy faith hath saved thee" (Matt. ix. 22, Luke vii. 50, Luke xvii. 19, Mark x. 52; cf. Matt. ix. 29, Matt. xv. 28).

As Mr. John Macmurray writes: "It is not faith about something, nor faith in someone, but simply faith, some inherent quality in the mind."² It is contrasted with fear in two passages: in the storm on the lake in the words, "Why are ye fearful? Have ye not faith?"; and in the encouragement to Jairus distressed about his daughter: "Fear not: only believe, and she shall be made well." It is contrasted more than once with

¹ Chapter XVI.

² *Adventure*, edited by B. H. Streeter, p. 38.

doubt; for instance, in the words to Peter when he failed to walk on the water: "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Faith, as Our Lord declares, is a faculty by which man is able to do wonderful things, especially when it is united with prayer. This appears in several sayings: "If thou canst! All things are possible to him that believeth." "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye would say unto this sycamore tree, Be thou rooted up, and be thou planted in the sea; and it would obey you." "Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do what is done to the fig tree, but even if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea, it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."¹ We may suppose that He meant that even a tiny amount of genuine faith will continually grow, enabling its possessor to accomplish ever mightier works for God and man. Another saying expresses much the same thought: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." To lack of faith He attributes anxiety about food and clothing (Matt. vi. 30), and also failure to work miracles (Mark ix. 19).

In the mouth of Our Lord "faith" evidently signifies some sort of confidence, or rather a confident activity productive of enterprise, almost venturesomeness. One might even imagine Him endorsing in a spiritual sense the well-known proverb, "Nothing venture, nothing have." One would hesitate to call it "self-confidence", and yet it is not merely confidence in God; it is rather confidence in oneself as an organ of the Divine Omnipotence. It is doubtless not easy for the earth-bound to cultivate, and yet it is attainable if the right method be adopted. Concentration is very helpful, and concentration

¹ Allan Menzies, in *The Earliest Gospel*, on Mark xi. 20-23, suggests that Jesus had in mind the rejuvenescence of Jerusalem, which at the time resembled a fig-tree having abundance of leaves but no fruit—plenty of show, but little or no results of real value.

needs quiet. But it should be concentration with prayer and meditation.

Our Lord expected His disciples, and, indeed, all who recognized their sonship to the Heavenly Father, to undertake and carry to successful issues wonderful and magnificent enterprises. The Christian life is, or should be, characterized by amazing energy and effectiveness, the wielding of mighty force derived by faith from the creative Spirit of God. It is in faith that the self-assertive instinct should have its outlet on its more active side.

(2) The word "hope" does not appear to have been often on the lips of Our Lord; yet He was constantly mentioning the object of hope, the Kingdom of God. For hope in the New Testament refers not so much to possibilities or probabilities as to certainties, and is equivalent rather to assurance. So in Our Lord's words: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." Similarly St. Paul: "Hope putteth not to shame" ("a hope which never disappoints us"—Moffatt). It is the vivid, though symbolic, and therefore inadequate, mental conceiving of that which shall be, sustaining and encouraging the believers in the Gospel in the midst of an alien and hostile world. The thought of the Kingdom of God and all that it involves—the eradication of sin, sonship to God, eternal life—makes men happy in trouble, brave before terrors and in sufferings. Hope is the lively imagination of the ethical end—the *summum bonum*, or such partial realization of it as will come in the nearer future—and so provides the object of moral activity and also helps to sustain the glowing vitality through which pains and difficulties are mastered. That the hope of the Kingdom stimulates to great sacrifices is one lesson of the parables of Hidden Treasure and the Pearl of Great Price.

(3) "The greatest of these is love." These words of St. Paul express the mind of Christ. Love is prior to faith and hope, being in its primitive form more within the power of the natural man. For it is comparatively easy to do an occasional kindness and to conjure up a little sympathy. The natural

love for parents may by a slight effort of the imagination be transferred to the Heavenly Father who cares for all His children, both the good and the bad. But love cannot develop very much without faith and hope—the faith whereby we get God’s help, the hope whereby we dream of what God intends to give us one day. Love begets both faith and hope—in St. Paul’s words, “Love believeth all things, hopeth all things.” But these must be cultivated as distinct virtues if love is to grow as it should. The consciousness of using God’s power by means of faith, and the assurance of a future in which all our cravings shall be abundantly satisfied, together give vigour and intensity to love. Increasing love demands the increase of faith and hope. Love—both for God and for man—is the more constant condition and activity, whereas faith and hope arise rather as occasion demands, but that should be frequently. Through faith and hope love does its work and grows and attains its fruition. Some such relation of these three primary virtues seems implicit in the teaching of Christ.

(4) Trust may be described as “passive faith”, such as was denoted by Our Lord when He forbade anxiety about food and clothing, and when He allayed the panic of the disciples in the storm. Faith counteracts the timidity that hesitates to act; trust counteracts the worry that will not rest. It is trust in the Providence of God that He is commending in the words: “The very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not: ye are more value than many sparrows.” Trust means the confidence that God will do His part, thus affording the sense of security for concentrating on the business of life. Still, we have no right to run unnecessary risks, especially not with the object of testing God’s power or willingness to protect us, as Our Lord showed in His answer to the temptation to fling Himself from a pinnacle of the Temple. On the other hand, trust in God when combined with devotion to God’s will may be deemed a safeguard against misfortunes other than those that are directly due to the performance of our task or duty. God may be relied on to guard against accidents, but not

necessarily against the sufferings and losses arising out of self-sacrifice in His Name, since to do so would be to destroy the self-sacrifice.

Trust, like other virtues, is both Godward and manward, both a religious and a moral virtue. The habit of trusting God encourages a similar reliance on the children of God. It was essential to the success and even the existence of the early Christian community in the midst of a hostile world that its members should trust one another. This trust enabled the little fellowship of Nazarenes at Jerusalem to "take their food with gladness and singleness of heart", confident that they would supply one another's wants. Naturally a breach of this trust was severely dealt with. But Our Lord bade men trust also the natural gratitude and kindness of the unconverted. "Give, and it shall be given you", He declared. He also sent out His disciples on a mission without weapons or money or change of raiment, and yet they lacked nothing (Luke xxii. 35). Trust is requisite for steady work: trust in God, that He will not allow our efforts to be wasted or thwarted; trust in our fellow-creatures, that they will help and not hinder us.

(5) Faith between God and men should be mutual. Not only should they have faith in Him, but He desires to have faith in them. Hence the need of trustworthiness or fidelity. Fidelity takes various forms: faithfulness in the fulfilment of promises and contracts, faithfulness as of servant to master, conscientiousness in the performance of duty or allotted task, loyalty to a superior, loyalty to relations and friends, loyalty to a cause or ideal. Our Lord seems to have spoken of fidelity mainly as diligent performance of tasks imposed by a superior, out of loyalty to him. This He emphasizes in the parable of the Servant Ploughing, in which He implies that His followers should perform their tasks as part of the normal routine of life, not expecting any special reward for doing so. He made urgent appeals to His disciples to be faithful in their mission when He was no longer visible to them. This is the *motif* of the forcible little parable of the Watching Servants, which

concludes so emphatically: "And what I say unto you I say unto you all, Watch." Jesus evidently had in mind the liability of devotion and industry to languish with the discontinuance of their inspiring causes. When the stimulus and encouragement and sense of obligation springing from His personality were of an irrevocable past, might not their zeal and energy decline? So He solemnly warns them to remain awake both to their duty and to the spiritual unseen, remembering the mighty issues dependent on their loyalty to the Gospel.

Fidelity, apparently rather as honesty, is stressed after the parable of the Unjust Steward: "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much." When Jesus accused the Scribes and Pharisees of neglecting "justice, mercy, and faith", probably fidelity is intended—fidelity in their responsibilities as religious leaders, and fidelity as between man and man.

It is in fidelity, the fulfilment of duty conscientiously and loyally, that self-respect finds one of its legitimate expressions, self-respect being, according to Professor McDougall, a form of self-assertiveness. The connection of self-respect with fidelity appears in the parable of the Talents. The indolent man experiences shame, which is wounded self-respect, when he is called by his master a "wicked and slothful servant". The energetic, who have multiplied their talents, experience a glow of legitimate pride at their master's commendation: "Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things." Self-assertiveness, as the impulse to energetic self-expansion, seems to operate, as remarked above, in the faith which removes mountains. In its more conservative form, as self-respect, concerned rather with personal worth and honour, it may strengthen fidelity, in the fulfilment of duty to God and man. Thus, that instinct which has been in human history the source of so much sin and woe may become under Christianity one of the mainsprings of the moral life.

(6) A very prominent virtue in the ethics of Jesus is one of

which the pagan world had hardly dreamed, but which was familiar in Hebrew tradition—namely, humility. The word “humble”, with its cognates, occurs fairly frequently in the Old Testament, especially in the Prophets and Psalms. Humility appears among the Hebrews as the human virtue corresponding to the greatness and majesty of God. It arises from the sense of man’s dependence upon and obligation to submit and subordinate himself to the Almighty Creator. It is conceived of as opposite to the tendency of powerful people to defy the Divine government of the world by oppressing their weaker neighbours. But a more definite ethical value is ascribed to this quality by Jesus. According to St. Luke, He concludes His remarks upon good manners at wedding-parties with this pregnant aphorism: “For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” The same words occur at the conclusion of the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. In St. Matthew they are found, with the future tense, after His injunction to His disciples not to use the titles of “father” and “master” of one another. St. Matthew also records how He rebuked their curiosity as to who should be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven by calling a child and setting him in the midst, with this comment: “Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.” St. Mark, in the same context, gives the saying thus: “If any man would be first, he shall be last of all, and minister of all.” After the conversation with the sons of Zebedee and the reference to the rulers of the Gentiles St. Mark records these words: “Whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister: and whosoever would be first among you shall be servant of all.” Similarly, St. Matthew in the same context.

Dr. E. F. Scott remarks that “in His revulsion from this unlovely type of piety [of the Pharisees] Jesus was led perhaps to place an excessive value on humility. . . . With the sensitiveness of a fine spirit He shrank from all forwardness and personal advertisement, and saw that they often defeated

themselves.”¹ But was His emphasis on humility excessive? We must estimate it in the light both of His illustrations of this virtue and of His personal practice of it. That humility, as Our Lord understood it, did not consist in constant self-depreciation, extreme diffidence, the so-called “inferiority complex”, or endless self-accusations or repinings on account of sin, we may gather from His taking children as typical of it. For children normally exhibit none of these characteristics, but a blithe light-heartedness and eagerness for adventure, which are their opposite. That humility is quite compatible with self-respect, resoluteness, dignity, and assertion of great claims appears both from His own conduct and demeanour, and from the encouragement He gave to His hearers to think of themselves as “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world”. According to one passage in the Psalms, which we have no reason for supposing that Our Lord disagreed with, humility is a characteristic of God Himself: “Who is like unto the Lord our God, that hath His seat on high, yet humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and on the earth?”

Humility concerns the two great instincts of self-assertion and self-subjection, being a limitation of the former and a development of the latter. We may attempt to describe it as the principle of self-accommodation to others—whether to definite individuals, to mankind, or to God. It rests upon the axiom that the worth of the individual consists in his worth to the whole of which he forms a part. It therefore is contrary to the impulse or tendency to make others conform to oneself. Humility prompts to the acceptance of even an unduly low estimation by others of one’s own worth, and to a limitation of one’s own life and development in the interests of the society of which one is a member, this abasement and limitation being only temporary, as Our Lord said, and leading to exaltation and expansion eventually. Humility is not precisely identical with self-consecration to the general welfare, but constitutes the

¹ *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 103, 104.

negative aspect of this, being the acceptance or endurance of limitation involved in living for the good of others. It is rendered possible by the instinct of self-abasement or subjection, which in the natural man prompts to the subjection between husband and wife and of subject to ruler and of the patriot to his country. Christian humility implies such a control over the instincts of self-assertion and self-abasement that they are pliant instruments or obedient servants of the personality as an agent of the purposes of God.

It takes various forms, according to Our Lord. In the first place it is strongly operative in repentance, as depicted in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. The latter at some pain to himself throws away the opinion of his own moral worthiness, subjecting himself to the moral standards which he has learnt from his religion and to the transforming power of God.

But humility is an essential constituent also of the normal moral life. As Our Lord pointed out, it shows itself as mutual deference in social intercourse; it also constitutes all work as service. Moreover, humility prompts to the performance of commonplace services, as symbolic of fellowship and equality of status. When Jesus washed the feet of His disciples He did something which might have been considered derogatory, as if inciting a feeling of disrespect for one who counted himself worthy of doing chiefly menial tasks. But there is no ground for disrespect if one is not thereby neglecting one's mission. Our Lord also showed humility in His method of preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God and seeking to win men's allegiance, the method of gentle appeals to their human nature and the self-effacement to which St. Matthew alludes in the quotation: "He shall not strive, nor cry aloud." He calls Himself "meek and lowly in heart", and enters Jerusalem "meek and sitting upon an ass", thereby signifying that He aspires to rule with the consent of His subjects. He commends meekness as a means of conciliating the overbearing and oppressive disposition. Above all, He was humble in sub-

mitting to misunderstandings and slights, to growing dislike and contempt, to the awful shame of a felon's death, all for the sake of the good of mankind. In the perfect life of the Kingdom of Heaven humility will remain as the continual self-accommodation of every personality to the good life in which all participate.

(7) One of the essential conditions of moral health and spiritual growth, according to Jesus, is sincerity. This was one reason for His exaltation of children, since they are less apt than adults to be sophisticated and readier to receive new truth with open-eyed wonder, as these words imply: "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes," that is, children and simple folk. It is this virtue which is signified in the Beatitude: "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." Our Lord perceived how prejudices and false ideas of self-interest distort the moral vision. It is true also that sensuality befogs it, though it is doubtful whether He was thinking of that in this passage. In any case, He asserts that clarity of moral vision is the condition for the development of spiritual insight, of which the highest stage is the beatific vision of God. It was the absence of sincerity in the religious teachers of the nation which prompted His frequent application to them of the word "blind": "Let them alone: they are blind guides. If the blind lead the blind, shall they not both fall into the ditch?" It is as if He said: "It is no use arguing with them. They and their followers will come to grief ere long." Again: "Thou blind Pharisee!" "This people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed." "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" In other words, want of sincerity results in a profound darkness of soul.

In all this Our Lord is referring mainly to inward sincerity and its opposite, self-deception. But He also insists on sincerity in the mutual dealings of men, the truthfulness or frankness which scorns solemn oaths and is content with a simple "yea

yea" and "nay, nay", plain affirmations and denials. Outward and inward sincerity naturally go together; also their contraries, rendering a man very difficult, not only to work with, but even to help.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus called His hearers "the light of the world". In St. John that title is reserved for Jesus Himself. Light—the light that is in God and streams from God—is a vital constituent of moral well-being and spiritual life and growth. It is, as the First Epistle of John declares, a condition of fellowship. It is essential to effective service to mankind, and more so in the higher forms of service. But it can illumine only the morally sincere, and these it enables to perceive and grasp truth after truth of God's Universe, and finally to behold God Himself.

(8) Lastly we may notice Our Lord's requirement of courage in His disciples. As Dr. E. F. Scott observes, "Christianity is essentially a religion of courage".¹ This is a virtue which can hardly be expected in children or babes in Christ, at least not in any pronounced degree, but belongs rather to the more mature. Yet where love is, there is the germ of courage. Perhaps it was shallowness of love which caused the defection of some of the hearers of the word under persecution—those whom in the parable of the Sower He compared to shallow soil over rocks. The courage which He enjoined may seem to have been chiefly of the passive order, patient endurance of suffering, rather than boldness in enterprise and attack, as when He spoke of the trials and woes that would befall His followers: "In your patience ye shall win your souls." Yet He Himself displayed active courage in courting death during His last visit to Jerusalem, when He defied the authorities by cleansing the Temple and uttered those vehement parables of the Two Sons and the Wicked Husbandmen. He also looked for active courage in His disciples, bidding them go forth and preach the Gospel, regardless of the world's malice and cruelty. Courage can hardly be deemed a distinctive Christian virtue,

¹ *The Ethical Teaching of Jesus*, p. 107.

since it was highly esteemed by pagans long before. But it is essential to a virile Christian life, being both its test and its stability.¹

These are not put forward as an exhaustive list of virtues, but as those most stressed by Jesus in the record of His teaching which has come down to us. They are by no means independent, but rather constitute certain aspects of the complete moral life as it appears to a sympathetic observer. As we have seen above in discussing moral principles, the unifying principle of the ideal moral action may be taken to be the motive of the production of good or, religiously expressed, the doing of the will of God. In this the various virtues become naturally related, each functioning to the degree and in the manner appropriate to the purpose of the moment. The perfect character will develop through the perfect service of the universal life.

¹ For the connection of courage with spirituality see p. 230.

CHAPTER XII

SIN AND SINS

CLEARLY Our Lord did not hold with the doctrine of the total depravity of human nature. At least children preserved a certain amount of innocence and goodness. The parable of the Sower implies that there were people corresponding to well-prepared soil who, when fertilized by the word of God, bring forth the fruit of good works. On the other hand, He did not hesitate to utter warnings of the appalling consequences of wrongdoing.

In a recent booklet, entitled *The Sin Obsession*,¹ Dr. Percy Dearmer has attempted to prove that Christian theology has enormously exaggerated the magnitude of sin, in comparison with what Jesus actually taught and thought about it. He writes as follows:—

If we examine the New Testament to find out what it has to tell us about this word, an amazing fact emerges, a simple fact of profound significance. The noun "sin" occurs some thirty-eight separate times in the writings of St. Paul (not counting repetitions of the word in the same verse), and sixty-three times in all the Epistles together. In the three Synoptic Gospels, where we are nearest to the sayings of Christ in His own characteristic language, the word is stated to have been uttered by Jesus once only. . . . Once the word is put into Our Lord's mouth in the singular and once in the plural. . . . Besides these two He twice pronounced forgiveness of sins (pp. 5, 6).

Even the verb and other cognates ("sinner", "sinful") are used comparatively rarely by Him in the Synoptic record.

All this goes to show that Jesus did not hypostatize sin, or include the whole human race in a universal abhorrence or condemnation. Yet that He regarded sin as a great evil is apparent from His allusions to Gehenna with its unquenchable fire, His description of the condition of Dives after death, and His ominous remarks about those who cause little ones to offend, and about Judas Iscariot. He cannot be said to have made light of, at any rate, certain more extreme forms of iniquity.

¹ One of the series entitled *Affirmations*.

But it is true, as Dr. Dearmer contends, that Jesus did not encourage people to be constantly thinking of their sins, so as to give rise to what he calls the "sin obsession", or a complex about it. Certainly, He spoke with approval of the publican who lamented, "God have mercy on me, a sinner!" But this state of pleading contrition did not last very long; for he went back home "justified", and therefore, we are given to understand, comforted. The disciples are not depicted as living in a state of penitence. On the contrary, they were encouraged—at least during the earlier part of the Ministry—to be blithe and happy. Jesus called on people to "repent"; but this meant, not so much sorrow for the past, as a resolution to live better in the future. This is borne out by the accounts of His dealings with penitent offenders, such as the woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee, the woman taken in adultery, the man sick of the palsy. He accepted their assurances, expressed or tacit, of their repudiation of their evil past, and cheerfully bade them go and sin no more.

This treatment of and attitude towards the moral ailments of mankind agrees with modern psychological therapeutics. Even in bodily diseases the wise physician discourages his patients from thinking much about them, but directs their minds to ideas of health and vitality. If it is detrimental to brood over bodily diseases, it is disastrous to brood over mental or moral diseases. To do so is to render oneself liable to become obsessed or hypnotized by them, thus maintaining and augmenting them. A brooding and fearful concentration on a vice delivers the person over as a slave to that vice, so that it rivets its chains on the soul. Sins should be recognized, to some degree analysed and abhorred; but the frequent repetition of this process is morbid and debilitating in the extreme.

In the sense that men should put their sins out of their minds, and think instead of what they would become and do by God's aid, Jesus did make light of sin; also in His confidence that God would dispossess the devil and deliver mankind from its moral maladies and their dreadful concomitants. Nevertheless, to

Him sin was a great evil, though its incidence varied considerably between one individual and another, and perhaps the condition of the continuance of the other kinds of evil which afflicted the children and, indeed, all the creatures of God.

We recall Sir Oliver Lodge's once much-discussed and criticized dictum: "The higher man of to-day is not worrying about his sins at all, still less about their punishment. His mission, if he is good for anything, is to be up and doing."¹ Sins are not to be lightly regarded or ignored, but should be recognized for what they are and eradicated. But worrying about them will probably make them worse. And certainly "the higher man", if by that is meant one who has repented and is living as a Christian should, will have no reason to vex himself about them, any more than the original disciples of Christ apparently did, but will be "up and doing" work in His name for the welfare of mankind. Yet a word of caution is here in place. Is "the higher man" really higher? Has he definitely and whole-heartedly consecrated himself to the service of God and man, or is he compromising and trying to serve God and mammon at the same time? It would not be just to deny all value to the work of worldly men. But for the transcendently important and difficult tasks of His Kingdom God requires thoroughly repentant—that is, self-consecrated—workers.

Our Lord left no definition of sin, but we may venture to express His view by calling it "personality in conflict with God"—especially personality in its aspect of will, but also, to some extent, as thought and emotion, seeing that He spoke of inward blindness and evil thoughts and wicked feelings, such as anger. He regarded it very much as a corporate condition, a malady affecting nations and classes in their solidarity. It was to Him the non-existence of the Kingdom of God in the characters of men, that moral attitude which conflicted with and opposed the coming of the Kingdom. He regarded sin as

¹ *Man and the Universe*, p. 220. Sir Oliver Lodge refers for justification to Matt. xxiv. 46 and xii. 43.

intimately connected with the satanic rule of the world. This is very much the view of the Fourth Gospel, as shown by the phrase "the prince of this world". He certainly thought of Satan as tempting man to sin, Himself more than once (Matt. iv. 1; xvi. 23), and Peter (Luke xxii. 31). On the other hand, we do not find that He attributed moral depravity to the influence of demons.¹ Probably He wished to represent human beings as masters of their own fate, for good or ill. We may suppose that He thought of the Kingdom of God as sooner or later abolishing sin.

Our Lord evidently regarded the heinousness of sin as varying with the degree of consciousness with which it was committed; so at least in this passage: "That servant which knew his lord's will and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." According to this, even wrong deeds which the doer does not know to be wrong have the quality of sin, but are not as bad as those which he does know to be wrong. Both kinds of sin debar from communion with God, and both if unforgiven necessitate painful remedies. But the element of conscious volition aggravates both the separation from God and the painfulness of the remedy.

One very striking feature of Our Lord's view of sin is that He apparently considers negative sinfulness, sins of omission, as being the more primitive, and positive sinfulness as springing from this. Not only does the fundamental character of the sin of not helping or not working appear in several sayings and parables, but in the parable of the Empty House it is clearly implied that the dispossessed demon re-enters the dwelling of the man's soul (or perhaps the national character), along with seven yet more malignant companions, just because he discovers it "empty, swept and garnished"—empty of moral purpose or endeavour, yet clear of hampering rubbish and

¹ J. E. Thomas, *The Problem of Sin*, p. 25: "We do not recall a single instance in which sin is associated with demoniacal possession."

suitably and attractively prepared for habitation. It is implied that the very absence of trouble or worry and the healthy state of the various mental faculties constitute a special danger of degradation, in the absence of any absorbing occupation or interest. We may venture to generalize from this the hypothesis that the neglect by the human race of its opportunities of vigorous co-operation with the Divine purposes was the first stage in that general corruption which inevitably led to the monstrous and fiendish vices and cruelties of aberrant civilizations.

We may now proceed to classify the main kinds and aspects of sin in the mind of Jesus, premising that He gave no systematic or scientific analysis of it, but called attention to those forms of unrighteousness among His contemporaries which appeared to Him most inimical to sonship to God and the service of man.

(1) The most serious of the more ordinary kinds of sin seems, in His view, to have been that of not helping those in distress. This is very obvious in the description of the judgment of the nations (Matt. xxv. 31 ff.). Not for any crimes or vices, but merely for neglect to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to visit sick folk and prisoners, are the multitudes of the earth excluded from the Kingdom prepared for the righteous from the foundation of the world, and consigned to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. A like callous indifference is apparently one reason at least why Dives finds himself in torment after death.

(2) Allied to this is the sin of not working, or not producing good. Our Lord called attention to this in various ways: (a) "He that is not with Me, is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me, scattereth abroad"; (b) both the parable and the incident of the barren fig-tree; (c) the unproductive kinds of soil in the parable of the Sower; (d) the parables of the Pounds and the Talents. It is not so much the ignorant multitudes who are guilty of this as those who know God sufficiently for Him to appoint them tasks and responsibilities. Under the same heading may be classified dilatoriness and want of perseverance,

as represented by the excuses of those who aspired to or were called to discipleship (Luke ix. 59-62).

(3) This leads us naturally to think of the infidelity of those who do not fulfil their promises or carry out their responsibilities. This is shown in the parable of the Two Sons, one of whom promised to work in his father's vineyard but neglected to do so; also in that of the Watching Servants: "But if that servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and the maidservants, and to eat and drink and to be drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he expecteth not and in an hour when he knoweth not, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the unfaithful." Infidelity, as well as indolence, is reprimanded in the parables of the Pounds and the Talents. After the parable of the Unjust Steward Jesus utters a warning against being unfaithful in the use of material wealth. "Unfaithful" here is almost equivalent to "dishonest".

(4) Akin to the foregoing, yet distinguishable, is infidelity in the sense of want of faith in God—a religious rather than a strictly moral fault. This Jesus considered to be a common failing in the people of the time, as these sayings show: (a) "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you, how long shall I bear with you!" (b) "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign" (twice: Matt. xii. 39; xvi. 4). (c) "Seek ye not what ye shall eat, and what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind." (d) "Shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" (e) "Why are ye fearful? Have ye not yet faith?" (f) "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (g) "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith upon the earth?" In these passages it appears to be on the whole rather faith of the passive order, or trust, the lack of which He deplures. But the absence of the passive faith which quietly waits upon God prevents the growth of the active faith which removes mountains with the might that God bestows. For where there is no trust there is timidity and irresolution, and therefore feeble ineffectiveness.

(5) Corresponding to the negative sin of indifference to the needs of others is the positive sin of harming or desiring to harm or bearing ill-will to others. Jesus was severe against anger and revenge and malicious thoughts and words, regarding them as lesser degrees of that state of soul which in its more extreme form produces murder. Even in the comparatively mild forms of being on bad terms with someone or refusing to forgive someone this sin is peculiarly inhibitive of communion with God (Matt. v. 23, 24; vi. 15).

(6) Besides malicious injury of another there is the corruption of another's character or interference with another's spiritual welfare from other motives, such as jealousy and sensuality. Jesus is very fierce towards this kind of offence: "It is impossible but that occasions of stumbling should come: but woe unto him through whom they come! It were well for him if a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, rather than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble." One can sympathize with His burning indignation, especially when it is a child who is corrupted or misled, though perhaps He was thinking more of disciples yet tender in the faith.

(7) Not so closely connected with a man's dealings with his neighbours is the sin which in modern language goes by the name of "materialism". It is obviously connoted by the Gospel phrase "to serve mammon". This means to be devoted to money and the things which can be bought with money; and these are very largely those which can be retained only through the retention of the body. Another kind of materialism which Our Lord found occasion to reprehend was the excessive devotion to domestic comfort exemplified in Martha, in contrast to Mary's preference of the delights and benefits of intercourse with Himself in friendship and affection. Materialism consists in the preference of things which affect us through the senses to those which make a more direct appeal to the soul in its nobler aspects. It differs from sensuality in being concerned more with relatively permanent material objects instead

of with the sensations which they produce. There is, however, no definite line of distinction.

(8) More than once Our Lord is reported as alluding to sin as uncleanness, defilement, decay: "that which comes out of a man is what defiles a man"; "inwardly full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness". It is apparently the sins which are more generally recognized as such which are of this character: "sexual vice, stealing, murder, adultery, lust, malice, deceit, sensuality, envying, slander, arrogance, recklessness" (Moffatt). But what exactly does "uncleanness" signify? Dirt, at least the worst kind of dirt, is not merely "matter in the wrong place", but matter alive with a potency harmful or deadly to the life of the organism to which it adheres. Dirt causes inflammation, sepsis, organic processes that give off poisons. The emotion of disgust serves the purpose of warning us against contact with, or absorption of, those substances alive with death. Similarly sin, at least the active kind of sin, sets up inflammation or sepsis in the soul. Both sensuality, which is the extravagant pursuit of the pleasure involved in gratifying the natural impulses,¹ and malice, including slander, jealousy, quarrelling, have this septic effect on the soul. The disgust or revolt of the conscience at these vices indicates this. They occasion diseases comparable to zymotic fevers or persistent abscesses, enfeebling and disintegrating, so that the soul becomes fit for the rubbish-heap of Gehenna, "where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched", till the imperishable core of personality is purged of its corruption.

(9) Pride appears as one of the sins most detested by the Israelites, for it signified to them the cruel oppression of their conquerors and the merciless treatment of the godly poor by the worldly rich. Consequently the antithesis between the sin of pride and the virtue of humility was a familiar and prominent feature of Hebrew thought. Pride consists in a perversion or

¹ The sensualist aims at the pleasure connected with the satisfaction of the instincts instead of at doing the act or accomplishing the object to which the instincts prompt. See A. G. Tansley, *Psychology and its Relation to Life*, p. 146.

extravagant activity of the self-assertive instinct. This instinct performs the highly important function of prompting to behaviour that inclines others to serve, or not to molest, the agent. This may be by force or by display. In the latter method the purpose is to cause others so to admire the agent as to favour him in various ways, or at least not to injure or interfere with him. In intelligent and sensitive creatures the very consciousness of being thought well of is stimulating and comforting. Self-assertion becomes morally wrong, at least in man, when it is selfish—that is, when it impairs or hinders the welfare of others. A particular form of this is when self-assertion or pride inhibits the agent from making that contribution to the general welfare which is due from him as a member of society. It is obvious that there are varieties of pride, according as it makes use of force or display, and as the object is to obtain the services of others, to evade serving them, or to delight in the thought of their admiration or even envy. Thus we have different words expressive of different kinds of pride—insolence, haughtiness, vanity, conceit, and several others. Pride may even be directed against God, more or less consciously, when it resists repentance. Our Lord called attention to pride, not so much in the brutal form of violent oppression as in the milder and subtler guises of social arrogance—for instance, in pushing behaviour at what we call “parties”, and neglect to entertain or associate with members of the lower orders. He was especially indignant at the pride of the religious minority, who set their own scrupulous piety in contrast to the comparative negligence of the masses. For it was this self-centred religiosity which rendered them so incapable of taking the lead in the national reform for which He looked.

(10) Deceitfulness was another deadly sin denounced by Our Lord. He expected a high standard of truthfulness and sincerity, as He shows when He expands the commandment against false swearing. He also castigates the insidious and hardly conscious acted falsehood of religious hypocrisy. He perceives that this deception of others leads to self-deception, to inner blindness

and the darkened soul, and culminates in the sin against the Holy Spirit, which is the attribution to the devil of the works really done by Divine aid. This self-delusion is the offspring of pride and a method of resistance to the saving mercy of God. It frustrated His efforts to bring some of the ablest but lamentably wrong-headed men of the time to a better mind.

(11) Various sins allied themselves to produce the great sin of the rejection of the Gospel. For the Gospel comprised both an offer and a demand—an offer of a better life and a demand for a higher righteousness. Insensitiveness to the higher values of the Kingdom of God, want of trust in God, unwillingness to live with more kindness, more zeal, more humility—all contributed to the lack of response to the appeal which Jesus made in His Heavenly Father's Name. It was this rejection of, or feeble response to, the good news of the Kingdom of God, with its implication of thoroughgoing repentance or reform, which prompted His reproaches and forebodings to the cities of Galilee and to Jerusalem and to the Jews generally in several parables and sayings. As the author of the Fourth Gospel writes, "He came unto His own; and His own received Him not". He came offering all manner of good things—deliverance from present calamities and miseries, general happiness and well-being, the spiritual new birth of humanity, leading on to wonders and glories yet unimagined by man. But in spite of considerable popular enthusiasm and excitement about Him, largely on account of His works of healing, the substance of His message was not really grasped by the people, and He found Himself misunderstood and ignored.

(12) The rejection of a prophet's message was normally followed by attacks on his person. Maltreatment and murder of God's messengers were habitual to the Chosen Race, as He points out in the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, and in the tragically ironical description of the Holy City: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets and stoneth them which are sent unto her!" He had previously, when warned of danger from Herod, given vent to this grim and caustic

remark: "It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." He meant that Jerusalem was the proper place for such exalted murders, and they would be quite out of order anywhere else. Persecution of the prophets naturally led up to and culminated in the persecution and murder of the Messiah. This supreme crime deserved a terrible penalty. So in the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen He alludes to God's vengeance for the slaughter of His Son, And He hints mysteriously and awfully, yet not without pity, at some unspeakable doom awaiting Judas. And yet He prays pleadingly: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Not only the Roman soldiers, but all of those who conspired to have Him horribly executed, were really ignorant of what they were doing. The wrath of Jesus melts away as He approaches His death of torture, and He knows that, though man's wickedness is great, yet the mercy of God is greater.

It has been sagely remarked that whereas in old days men prayed to be delivered from their sins, they now seek to be cured of their complexes. Is then "complex" the modern psychological equivalent of the religious term "sin"? It is undeniable that sins cause complexes, or discords in the soul, such as a stabbing conscience, insatiable lusts and passions (Plato's hydra-headed beast), the conflict of higher with lower. One does not associate serenity with depravity.

But it is plain that sinfulness and psychic discord do not vary concomitantly. For sufferers from shock are not necessarily morally bad, while some of the worst criminals may have a calm and self-possessed demeanour. In fact, inward conflict may be a sign of moral impulses at work, and equanimity in crime proves that virtue is dormant or suppressed.

Sin involves some conflict, as it consists in a disagreement with the Spirit of the Universe. But the various constituents of the sinner's personality may be mutually adjusted in the pursuit of evil, and his immediate environment, particularly his social environment, may be in tolerable agreement with

his mode of living. Yet, since human personality has been fashioned in the Divine image, his equanimity is likely to be occasionally ruffled by the stirrings of suppressed inclinations towards good. And there are certain to be disturbing elements in his environment which it requires some effort to keep at bay. The harmony of wickedness is a forced and artificial harmony, at all times precarious.

We naturally conceive of real goodness as wholly at peace within itself. And yet one whose ideals are far in advance of his generation will necessarily find himself something of a misfit. He will in consequence have impulses which must be balked of their full expression and satisfaction. But this discord will have to be resolved, not inwardly by psycho-therapeutics, but outwardly through inducing the world to conform to his ideals. Yet for him to accomplish this effectively he must in some sense receive the antagonism of the world into his consciousness, and there, at no little cost to himself, meet and overcome it.

The Gospels give us the impression of a Personality of wonderful serenity and poise, of extraordinary strength and energy combined with gracious ease. And yet He was tempted and once confessed to a feeling of strain and disquietude until something which awaited Him should have taken place. We may say, in reverence, that Jesus had His complex, one that was forced on Him by the disagreement of His human environment with the high and pure ideal of the Divine purpose. He resolved that complex, not simply by beating down all opposition, but by allowing that opposition to spend itself and be consumed in the glowing spirit of love which He derived from His Heavenly Father. He therewith attained a deeper and firmer peace, a peace that passed all understanding, and which He was able to communicate to His friends and followers. It is the peace into which all the conflicts of the world will be resolved. May it not be worth while to attempt to express the Atonement in psychological terms?

CHAPTER XIII

THE PHARISAIC COMPLEX

"YE serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the damnation of hell?" Dr. Moffatt translates it thus: "You serpents! you brood of vipers! how can you escape being sentenced to Gehenna?"

If another had said this, would not a doubt have crossed our minds whether it was a Christian utterance? However depraved and perverted any class of men may be, is it ever right to speak of them with such hissing contempt and loathing? Granted the appropriateness of reproof and blame and even indignation—loud warning to any who seem to be heading for "that sad, obscure, sequestered state where God unmakes but to remake the soul"¹—but surely not such virulence. How would it appear if any of us spoke in this manner of our religious opponents, however wrong-headed, vicious, iniquitous? So Dr. Claude Montefiore: "'Righteous anger' is one thing; indiscriminating abuse of an entire class is another. Matt. xxiii seems to be the most 'unchristian' chapter in the Gospels. 'I came to call sinners to repentance.' Was this the right way to set about it?"² We may thus formulate our first objection to taking the invective against the Pharisees in the Gospels as the literal report of what Jesus actually said: it seems contrary to His character and method of saving souls to speak to or of anyone, however wicked, so savagely.³

Our second objection is that the Pharisees as a class were by no means so wicked as these passages would lead one to think. For they believed in loving God and their neighbours, even though they had very limited conceptions as to what this love involved and who were to be counted neighbours. They were charitable and generous, even though from impure

¹ Robert Browning, *The Ring and the Book*, "The Pope".

² *The Synoptic Gospels*, 2nd edition, vol. ii, p. 296.

³ The abuse of Jesus in the Talmud may be regarded as to some extent retaliatory. Vide A. T. Robertson, *The Pharisees and Jesus*, pp. 54-6.

motives. They were punctilious in religious services, even though their devotions were marred by self-complacency. They believed in a future life, even though only for a minority of human beings. There were high-minded and humane teachers among them, even though the ideals of these fell far short of those of the Gospel. After all, if it had not been for the Pharisees defending the purity of their religion during and after the time of the Maccabees, and withal spreading noble thoughts among the people, it is doubtful whether there would have been a soil prepared, to use Our Lord's own metaphor, in which He could have sown the word of God. And there would have been no St. Paul. We may well sympathize, then, with the eminent exponents of liberal Judaism in their resentment at the attacks in the Gospels on a class of men who appear to have been honourable and devout, though shortsighted and narrow-minded.

A third reason for doubting whether Our Lord spoke against them precisely as He is reported to have done is that He was on fairly good terms with many of them up to the end of His ministry. He appears to have been a welcome guest in several of their houses. On one occasion certain Pharisees are apparently recorded as giving Him a friendly warning: "Get thee out, and go hence; for Herod would fain kill thee." It was probably Pharisaic Scribes who heartily congratulated Him on His reply to the Sadducees' objection to belief in a resurrection. Also, just about the time to which the attacks on the Pharisees are attributed, He commended one of their order, who had acknowledged the two principal commandments of love, with high praise and comforting assurance: "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God." Once when He did reproach them for objecting to His broad humanity, it was by means of a gentle sarcasm, said perhaps with a kindly smile, if indeed it was sarcasm at all: "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners." Did He not thereby recognize that they had a certain rectitude and virtue?

A fourth reason is that the chief passage in question,

Matt. xxiii, bears marks of redaction (or alteration by Scribes). Canon Streeter expresses his opinion on it as follows:—

This . . . cannot be referred to a single written source without raising great difficulties. Matthew's is much the longer version, and it reads like an early Jewish Christian polemical pamphlet against their oppressors the Pharisees. No doubt it is largely based upon a tradition of genuine sayings of Christ, but we cannot but suspect that it considerably accentuates the manner, if not also the matter, of His criticism of them. Indeed, it is the one discourse of Our Lord which, from its complete ignoring of the better elements in a movement like Pharisaism, it is not easy to defend from the accusation made by students of Jewish religion of being unsympathetic and unfair. Now it is quite commonly assumed as almost self-evident that Matthew's version stood in Q, and that Luke's is an abbreviated reproduction of the same source. But there are three considerations which give us pause: (1) The divergence between the parallels is well above the average in wording and it is accompanied by a great variety in the order—a signpost for conflation. (2) There is a fundamental difference in structure between the two discourses. . . . (3) It is to be noted that quite the most striking of the very few cases in the Gospels where the diversity between Matthew and Luke can be plausibly accounted for by independent translation from Aramaic occur in this discourse.¹

In so far as Our Lord did accuse the Pharisees as He is reported, it is conceivable that His charges were not so sweeping as they appear; in fact, that His criticisms were directed in the main against the stricter party, namely, the disciples of Shammai, who it is supposed by scholars were at that period in the ascendant. Thus Israel Abrahams: "It is by no means improbable that at the time of Jesus the views of Shammai were quite generally predominant, the school of Hillel only gaining supremacy in Jewish law and custom after the fall of the Temple."² To the more humane party of Hillel, from which later Judaism in the main sprang, Our Lord's strictures did not and would not apply, at least with such force.

However all that may be, that there were grievous faults in the Pharisaism of the time of Jesus is hardly disputable, and, indeed, that they were in the main what St. Matthew represents them as being, even though we hesitate to ascribe to Our Lord

¹ *The Four Gospels*, pp. 253, 254.

² *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels*, 1st series, p. 15.

either the peculiar ferocity of the invective reported or the wholesale condemnation of all that went by that name. The very fact that their leading members did not interpose to prevent the crucifixion is enough to prove that they had, to say the least, very serious limitations in their religious outlook. We may suppose that the faults attributed to them in St. Matthew did substantially constitute the reason why they did not accept the Gospel, either from Jesus or from His disciples afterwards.¹

Indeed, they can be condemned out of the mouths of their successors. The famous classification of Pharisees in the Talmud, which goes back to the Gospel times or even before, is a striking instance of this. I transcribe it as it appears in the article on Pharisees in the *Jewish Encyclopædia*:—

An ancient *baraita* enumerates seven classes of Pharisees, of which five consist of either eccentric fools or hypocrites: (1) "the shoulder Pharisee", who wears, as it were, his good actions ostentatiously upon his shoulder; (2) "the wait-a-little Pharisee", who ever says, "Wait a little, until I have performed the good act awaiting me"; (3) "the bruised Pharisee", who in order to avoid looking at a woman runs against the wall so as to bruise himself and bleed; (4) "the pestle Pharisee", who walks with his head down like the pestle in the mortar; (5) "the ever-reckoning Pharisee", who says, "Let me know what good I may do to counteract my neglect"; (6) "the God-fearing Pharisee", after the manner of Job; (7) "the God-loving Pharisee", after the manner of Abraham.

The faults enumerated are not those of outrageous vice or wickedness, but savour of that artificiality and excessive self-consciousness such as the criticisms in the Gospel suggest. Seeing that any class of people is apt to have the defects of its

¹ R. Travers Herford, in *Pharisaism*, represents the conflict as being "between two fundamentally different conceptions of religion, viz. that in which the supreme authority was Torah [the Law], and that in which the supreme authority was the immediate intuition of God in the individual soul and conscience" (pp. 167, 168). He attributes deficiency of sympathy to both sides in the dispute. But he tends to overlook the faults to which this religion of Torah led its devotees. A telling reply is made by Dr. A. T. Robertson in *The Pharisees and Jesus*, who alludes to "the minutiae and hair-splitting tortuosities of the Mishnah and the Gemara" (p. 34). But for a calmer and more impartial estimate of the Pharisees we may refer to *Jewish Sects and Parties in the Time of Jesus*, by J. W. Lightley.

qualities, it may be worth while to consider what the Pharisees set out to be—what were their principles and aspirations.

To quote again from the *Jewish Encyclopædia*: “‘Perisha’ (the singular of ‘Perishaya’) denotes ‘one who separates himself’, or keeps away from persons or things impure, in order to attain the degree of holiness and righteousness required in those who would commune with God.” Hence they made a practice of “avoidance of the ‘*Am-ha-Aretz*’ (the ignorant and careless poor).”² Again: “The Pharisees made the Torah a power for the education of the Jewish people all over the world.” Yet again: “The ethics of the Pharisees are based upon the principle, ‘Be ye holy, as the Lord your God is holy’ (Lev. xix. 2).”

This derivation of “Pharisees” has not gone undisputed. Dr. J. W. Lightley says that there are three possible interpretations: “(1) the usual one, viz. ‘the separatists’, that is, from people or things, or both; (2) ‘interpreters’, that is, of the Law; and (3) ‘seceders’ or ‘expelled’ from the Sanhedrin.”² But the second and third are exposed, he thinks, to considerable objections, and though these hardly prove the correctness of the first, yet “it can hardly be denied that, though they went to and fro among the ordinary people, they were not of them, and indeed regarded the bulk with a measure of contempt. . . . Besides, the name the Pharisees chose for themselves, ‘Haberim’, meaning ‘colleagues’ or ‘fellow-members’, indicated membership of a community which separated itself from the rest of the people, whom they called in derision ‘*Am-ha-Aretz*, i.e. the People of the Land.”³ In other words, they were separatists by principle and in practice, whatever the derivation of their name.

The Pharisees, then, stood for two great aspects of their national religion—namely, strict obedience to the Law of God, and separation from those who did not obey it. The Israelites had long considered themselves the Elect People, who were to

¹ See article on ‘Am ha-’Arec, by Dr. Israel Abrahams, in *The Synoptic Gospels*, 2nd edition, by C. G. Montefiore, vol. ii, p. 647.

² *Jewish Sects and Parties in the Time of Jesus*, p. 29.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

keep the Commandments of God conscientiously and to preserve themselves from all contamination by other nations. The Pharisees took this ideal to heart, and became, as it were, an Israel within an Israel. Hence their type of piety was characterized, first by legality, secondly by exclusiveness. To this double source may be attributed those perversions which set them in opposition to Jesus, and rendered them altogether incapable of taking the lead under Him in the regeneration of their country, and through their country of the world.

First, as to the Law, we may remark that the relation of a ruler or lawgiver to his subjects is by no means the highest of earthly relationships. Obedience is a comparatively inferior form of intercourse—at any rate, far below that of filial affection, which includes obedience, but is much more. Then the Hebrew Law, as represented by the Ten Commandments, was predominantly negative, being for the most part restraints upon disloyal and superstitious religion and upon socially injurious conduct. The ceremonial law was, indeed, positive, but far too detailed and particular to furnish suitable channels for generous enthusiasm, whether religious or moral. But, apart from these defects, the predominant stress upon obedience to a set of rules tended to an egoistic conception of values. It encouraged excessive regard in the agent for the worth of his own virtue as an end in itself, instead of as a factor in a wider good.

This perverse tendency was increased by the other aspect of Hebrew religion—the principle of separation, of avoidance of contamination, whether by Gentiles or by the less religious of the nation. These passages are typical expressions of this obligation on the good to keep themselves aloof from the bad and indifferent: "I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people" (Lev. xx. 24). "Thou didst separate them from among all the peoples of the earth, to be Thine inheritance" (1 Kings viii. 53). "Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing" (Isa. lii. 11). This idea of goodness separate from evil runs through the Old Testament. It was, indeed, emphatically conveyed by the most

exalted adjective in the Hebrew language, that which more than any other seemed appropriate to apply to the Almighty Creator, the word "holy".¹ The Israelites were to be a chosen people, practising righteousness according to revealed laws, and scrupulously guarding themselves from defiling contact with an unregenerate world.

This diagnosis of the moral malady of Pharisaism agrees with the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. St. Luke records that it was spoken to "certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and set all others at naught", or, as Dr. Moffatt translates, "were sure of their own goodness and looked down upon everybody else". The Pharisee prays in these words: "I thank Thee, O God, I am not like the rest of men, thieves, rogues, and immoral, or even like yon tax-gatherer" (Moffatt). What Jesus blamed them for was not primarily lack of penitence, since He was not apt, so far as the record shows, to insist much on that. Nor was it for low conduct or lack of piety, since the Pharisees were, on the whole, above the average in these respects. It was certainly not neglect to ascribe their virtues to Divine aid, since this Pharisee does definitely thank God for making him good. Nor again was it precisely want of aspiration to grow in righteousness, since they did constantly strive to keep the Law more fully. Their fault evidently lay in their contempt for sinners, or, more explicitly, in their treatment of the sins and failings of others as a dark background to set off the brightness of their own behaviour. This was an insulting and cruel attitude to take to their brother mortals, so different from the attitude of Jesus, as expressed in the words: "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." The two methods of reaction to the sin of others are in violent contrast: that of pleased comparison with one's own virtue, and that of pity and eagerness to help. But the dreadful offence against humanity and love in the Pharisaic

¹ *Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible*, "Holiness": "It is correct to say that a holy object is one 'separated' from common use and contact by supernatural sanctions."

attitude to sin eludes recognition just because there is so much would-be righteousness in it. Consequently the publican, in one sense a much worse man, gets more benefit out of his prayers than the no less earnest and devout exponent of the national faith.

This Pharisee, like others of his class, went far beyond the Old Testament principle of separation from the ungodly in that he drew himself aloof, not only from Gentiles, not only from such social outcasts as the traitorous and sometimes dishonest publicans, but even from the less devout and scrupulous majority of his own nation, the '*Am-ha-Aretz*, the toiling multitudes whose labour left them scant opportunity for long and elaborate observances. Such, at least, seems to be the implication of his words: "God, I thank Thee that I am not as the rest of men," though he is surely unfair in ascribing to them in general such flagrant wickedness. This exclusiveness was only the logically inevitable extension of the principle expressed in those lofty behests: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." "Be ye holy; for I am holy."

Certainly separation was not the final word of the Hebrew religion. One ostensible motive of this holy exclusiveness was eventually to make all mankind righteous and God-fearing. So it was said by the Lord to Abraham: "In thee shall families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xii. 3). Consequently the day would come when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. xi. 9). We need not imagine that the Pharisees were remiss in cherishing or expressing that prophetic hope. But they probably thought, as some passages in the Old Testament encouraged them to do, that the Gentiles would in the age to come be subordinate to the Israelites; and, in any case, their influence in bringing about the consummation was rather to be by setting a good example than by active help. Pharisaism was the quintessence of Judaism, the expression in an extreme form of the religion of the Jews, and for that reason found itself irreconcilably opposed to the Son of Man.

Not that Judaism was wholly wrong. It appears rather as a truncated form of what we may believe to have been the Divine plan: the training of one nation in isolation, to be subsequently Heaven's agent for the salvation of the rest. Similarly, we may imagine parents with noble ideals, carefully shielding their children from outside corruption, yet training them in the hope that they will eventually go forth to contend against the evils of the world. Yet if these children became so strongly imbued with the obligation of being good at home and avoiding bad companions, as to become contemptuous of the majority of mankind, their parents' hopes would be frustrated. But we must bear in mind that men can shut the ears of their souls to the voice of their Heavenly Father more easily than children can their bodily ears to the voice of their earthly parents. The Pharisees did not grasp that God required much more of them than to stay at home and be good. Pharisaism was the quintessence of Judaism, and Judaism was a truncated Hebraism, an imperfect understanding of what God was trying to teach the Israelites through the prophets.

The root sin of Pharisaism is a species of egoism, which may be variously described as selfishness or pride—a selfish contentment with one's own virtue in contrast to the vices of others, a proud exaltation of self coupled with contempt for those who have not been similarly favoured. It is the grown-up form of the childish failing of priggishness, the badness that does not recognize itself as such because it is a zeal for goodness. But badness it is none the less, because it is not to *be* good that God primarily requires of us, but to *do* good; just as it is required of an engineer, not primarily to have engineering skill, but to make useful machinery; or of a teacher, not to have ability to teach, but to instruct pupils. Likewise the Universe is intended to be, what its name implies, a unity of interacting and mutually supporting parts. To say and think and pray as the Pharisee did—"God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men"—is in truth to blaspheme against the very principle of Divine life—the love that ever serves and gives.

This self-conscious, self-centred morality, ever turning round upon itself, self-admiring, self-analysing, self-congratulating, cannot give peace to the heart. The soul that has embraced this as its ideal is ill at ease, and yet from the standpoint which it has adopted is unable to discover the cause of its malady. Therefore it suppresses its vexing sense of sin and makes a complex for itself.

Then, to maintain this suppression of the sense of sin, it uses various methods of convincing itself of being righteous, known technically in psychological language as "compensations". To quote Dr. R. H. Thouless on this subject: "What is appearing in consciousness and in behaviour is not the repressed sentiment, but the system by which it is repressed. The apparent conversion of a mental system into its opposite (which is one variety of the mechanism we shall call 'compensation') is one that is well known outside psychological treatises."¹ The Pharisees fought and kept under their moral disquiet, their uncomfortable conscience, by the process which Jesus called "hypocrisy"—play-acting. They behaved in the generally recognized pious and moral manner scrupulously and with fervour, so far as practicable before spectators, otherwise with that attentive self-consciousness in which the agent looks on at himself and silently applauds. The real, though unconscious, motive of this religious conscientiousness and zeal was to quell the feeling of radical unrighteousness by means of a strong assurance of righteousness.

We may notice some of these "compensations", as recorded in the criticisms put in the mouth of Our Lord by the Evangelists: public performance of virtuous and pious acts, the assumption of dignity in dress and demeanour, extreme scrupulousness in observance of the Law, the profession of such reverence for the Law as to demand that urgent human needs must give way to it, the invention and practice of additional works of piety, severity towards the failings of others, the profession of profound admiration for the great men of

¹ *Social Psychology*, p. 81.

the past. This last is a subtle but not uncommon way of fortifying the sense of one's own essential rightness. By admiring the good and noble one seems to class oneself with them.

All these are devices by which the Pharisees attempted to assure themselves of their intense devotion to the standard of righteousness inherent in their religion. The more they succeeded the blinder they tended to become to forms of goodness which conflicted with their own. When one such presented itself they found themselves obliged to explain it away somehow as not real goodness. Thus, when Jesus, who held a different standard, nevertheless proved Himself capable of curing demoniacal possession, they resorted in desperation to the far-fetched theory that He did it as an agent of the prince of demons. This Jesus shows is not only a very absurd hypothesis, but is in effect an insult to the Spirit of God, by whose aid these works were really done. This perverse blindness to good and confounding of it with evil is, He says, a terrible spiritual malady which, more than others, is likely to resist a cure. It is not a sin which can be repented of and forgiven in the ordinary way.

One curious development of this moral attitude is the emphasis and attention bestowed upon the subsidiary and unimportant, till it seems to overshadow what is primary and essential. This is noticed in words which we must surely attribute to Our Lord: "Ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and neglect the weightier matters of the law." This is due to the fact that the observance of the weightier matters yields no comforting sense of righteousness. The apparent remedy is to elaborate and add to the commandments. But, as usual, the novel interests more than the customary, the new practices occupy the attention instead of the formed habits. This loss of interest in the chief commandments or principles of morality comes from their being conceived of as ends in themselves, as virtues which are to be practised for virtue's sake. When the man has, in his view, fully succeeded in being just in his

dealings, merciful to the poor, faithful in the observance of his contracts, he does not perceive what more he can do in these particular respects. Therefore, not having peace at soul, he invents extra commandments. But if the purpose of life from the commencement be taken as, not the righteousness or goodness of the agent, but the accomplishment of the will of God for humanity or the Universe, then the task is practically infinite. There will be ever fresh scope for the exercise of the moral principles, in the shape of new needs to be met and more good to be attained. The very idea of diverting the main attention to little details and refinements will appear absurd and traitorous to God and man.

In general, Pharisaism was not easy to deal with, because it rested on a false premise which *prima facie* appeared obvious, not to say axiomatic. This premise was that God required that man should aim at righteousness—at being good, both morally and religiously, in accordance with certain laws. But to take one's own righteousness as the main end of life is to commit and to become imbued with a sin that is calculated to distort and poison the whole of the moral life—the sin of egocentricity. And the form in which righteousness was conceived of by the Jews—namely, that of obedience to commandments which were mainly negative—made the malady more acute and difficult to cure. The only remedy was the adoption of a radically different moral principle, one of living for others. Jesus offered them such a principle, that of love for God and man. This they acknowledged theoretically, but their long habituation in an egocentric view of virtue made them slow to apprehend love in its perfect unselfishness.

The New Testament provides a splendid example of the resolution of the Pharisaic complex. St. Paul records that he was “a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees”, “a Hebrew of Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee”. In Rom. vii. he describes the sense of sin which had afflicted him: “I am carnal, sold under sin.” He knew the Law well enough, but found himself

unable to keep it, especially the Tenth Commandment, against coveting. He had a sincerer conscience and perhaps a more ardent human nature than the normal Pharisee, who believed that he kept the Law fairly well. For he was aware of unrighteous desires that resisted all efforts to discipline and moralize them. He attempted to compensate for this *malaise* by means of vehement warfare against the supposed enemies of the Law—namely, the sect of the Nazarenes. But there was something in them which appealed to his nobler self, especially, we may suppose, in the martyr Stephen—the angelic look with which he faced his accusers, the logic of his argument proving the subordinate character of the Temple and its sacrifices, the courage and magnanimity of his dying moments. To counteract the growing attractiveness of the new faith he redoubled his violence against its adherents, till the moment came when under the influence of heavenly inspiration he yielded to the appeal of the Man of Nazareth.

The formula by which he expressed his emancipation from Pharisaism, the solution of his complex, seems to have been in the terms of a Pharisaic or rabbinical antithesis—between works and faith. But he expanded faith to mean faith in Christ crucified, and declared this to be the method of justification, or becoming right with God. He identified “works” with the legal works of Judaism, the performance of the law, both ceremonial and moral, as an exercise in righteousness. It is obvious, from the standpoint of moral psychology, that works done, so to speak, for works’ sake, and not for the objective results, are tainted with egoism, and therefore are essentially of the nature of sin. Faith, on the other hand, in the sense of surrender to another, takes one out of oneself, thus relieving the inner tension and setting the personality in relation to a wider good. When this faith is directed to a martyr in his martyrdom, to one whose character is expressed in a great act of self-sacrifice, the negation of selfishness and the affirmation of the principle of living for others are still more enhanced. But since the martyr was for St. Paul the Son of God, surrender to Him evoked,

not only his moral, but also his religious impulses in full force, and provided them with an intense satisfaction. He was justified, saved, at peace with God, open to receive His Spirit.

How far, let us ask, was St. Paul's escape from the malady of Pharisaism complete and satisfactory? It would seem that he could hardly go farther in abjuration of the old self-centredness than in his career of Apostle to the Gentiles, with all the compassionate service and self-sacrifice that it involved. Yet he never quite attained to the serene geniality that characterized his Master, and to some he seems imbued with rabbinism to the end. Faith saved him because it was, in his own expression, "faith active in love" (Gal. v. 6—Moffatt). Yet the formula, "not by works, but by faith", is no open sesame to righteousness and peace with God, as subsequent imitations of Paulinism have made evident. To try to get salvation by means of faith no more delivers from egocentricity than to try to get it by means of works. Indeed, perhaps less so, since there is more substance in the repetition of ceremonies and almsgiving than in the constant reiteration of a statement, however true and important. Even when faith is interpreted as trust or self-surrender, it becomes forced and stilted unless it promotes acts aimed at objective good. St. Paul's doctrine, though not his life, was concerned very much with the transition from sin to righteousness, and the stereotyping of this, in dissociation from his zeal of service and his glorification of love, has produced sterile kinds of religion. If we are to follow St. Paul, we must view his creed in the light of his unselfish life and glowing thoughts.

There are various forms or analogues of Pharisaism, centred round various kinds of excellences and achievements—the same general type of moral malady, with its components of pride, uneasiness of conscience, hypocrisy. There is Pharisaism in certain modern religious attitudes, Pharisaism of intellectual attainments, of scientific knowledge, of the fine arts, of athletic prowess, of rank, of polite manners, of fashion, of domesticity, of bodily appearance. Religious Pharisaism is more obstinate

than most, because religion rightly claims a position of dominance. But some of these others are in a way more despicable, since from the start they are concerned with subordinate and even trifling matters. The Pharisaism of fashion is a mean and wretched thing compared with that of the real Pharisees, who at least professed to love God above all and their neighbours as themselves.

But now that the constitution of human personality is being so assiduously and scientifically investigated we may cherish hopes that such maladies may be more readily diagnosed and the appropriate remedies prescribed. But the supreme remedy must be now, as it was for St. Paul, faith in Jesus Christ, active in love.

CHAPTER XIV

REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS

WHAT places have inducements and deterrents in ethical theory and moral education? And how are good conduct and qualities to be encouraged, and bad conduct and qualities to be discouraged and eradicated? The subject of "sanctions" has been accorded considerable importance by some ethical philosophers, pre-eminently by Jeremy Bentham, the utilitarian, who held that only by pain and pleasure can a man be made to fashion his behaviour in accordance with the happiness of the community.¹ Dr. Muirhead gives the following summary of Bentham's doctrine on the subject:—

(1) The "natural sanction", consisting of the physical pains following on disregard of natural laws.

(2) The "political sanction", consisting of legal penalties.

(3) The "popular or social sanction", namely, public approval or disapproval.

(4) The "religious sanction", or hopes and fears of reward and punishment in a future life.

(5) The "internal or moral sanction"—that is, the pleasures and pains of conscience.

Dr. Muirhead emphatically declares that "conduct which issues from regard for these sanctions is *not* morality"; yet he allows that they are of value; for "what these influences really effect is not the artificial repression of the deeper instincts and impulses of the normal individual, but the restraint of such of them as in the cruder state obstruct the course of normal development". Consequently they have "educational value".² If that be so, need there be any surprise that Our Lord spoke of rewards and punishments? It is to be remarked that He alluded

¹ "Sanction" is the means provided for the enforcement of law. The term comes from Roman law: "Legum eas partes quibus poenas constituimus adversus eos qui contra leges fecerint, sanctiones vocamus" (Justinian, *Institutes*, § 1).

² *Elements of Ethics*, pp. 106-8.

to three or four of these five kinds: the political sanction in reference to murder and debt; the social sanction in reference to the shame and honour consequent respectively on pushing and retiring behaviour at wedding-feasts; the religious sanction very emphatically in several well-known passages; the internal sanction less obviously; but it is implied in the narrative more than once, particularly in the case of Judas, and also where Our Lord speaks of praise and rebuke (e.g. Luke xix. 17, 22).

And yet the prominence in Our Lord's teaching of the prospects of rewards and punishments may be to some a little perplexing. Perhaps we can understand more readily His mention of punishment. Both for the sake of those who might be victims of dreadful cruelty or callousness, and for the sake of those tempted to perpetrate such wickedness, some warning of the appalling doom to which it leads seems right and necessary. This is so when He spoke of "Gehenna where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched", when He alluded to the torments of Dives following on his self-indulgence and callous indifference towards Lazarus, when He indicated the terrible doom of those who have not ministered to the wants of their fellow-creatures, when He uttered vague and awful threats against those who offended "one of these little ones", also against those who attributed His works of mercy to satanic agency, and when He predicted the exclusion from the Kingdom of Heaven of all who failed to reach the higher standard of righteousness that He preached. It is only fair, it might be said, to warn sinners of the consequences of their evil-doing or lack of well-doing. But when He deliberately holds out entrancing prospects for those who do good we may be tempted to feel that, for the sake of a quicker and wider response to His behests, He is imperilling the holiness of the Christian life, which should be motivated only by love for God and man. How much there is in the Gospel concerning the reward of goodness may be seen from consideration of the following:—

"Great is your reward in Heaven."

"Else ye have no reward with your Father which is in Heaven."

"Thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee."

"Love your enemies and do them good, and lend, never despairing; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be sons of the Most High."

"He shall in no wise lose his reward."

"Lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven."

"Make for yourselves purses which wax not old, a treasure in the Heavens which faileth not."

"Go, sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven."

"There is no man that hath left home, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for My sake, and for the Gospel's sake, but he shall receive a hundred-fold now in this present time, homes and brethren and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions; and in the age to come eternal life."

We may add to all this the promise of exceeding happiness intended for those who do Christ's bidding, according to some of the parables: for instance, life in the Kingdom of Heaven presented under the metaphor of a feast, and the expression, "Enter thou into the joy of thy lord", in the parable of the Talents. We may conjecture that this last signifies an invitation to become a partner in the master's business and profits.

All this is apt to offend the ethical purist, as detracting from the disinterestedness essential to the highest kind of righteousness. The reply to this will fall under several headings.

(1) In the first place, we may notice that Jesus did once at least emphasize duty for duty's sake—in the parable of the Servant Ploughing, of which He pointed the moral in the following words: "Doth he thank the servant because he did the things that were commanded? Even so ye also, when ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say,

We are [unprofitable¹] servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do."

(2) Secondly, we must remark that there is nothing wrong in desiring or aiming at happiness, or in seeking to avoid misery for oneself. Pleasures and pains are Nature's own stimuli for inducing behaviour beneficial to the agent and discouraging behaviour injurious to him. It is normally rather right than wrong to satisfy appetites and desires: to drink when thirsty, to rest when tired, to inquire into the truth of a matter that excites interest. How, indeed, could one be expected to take trouble to relieve another's pain, or promote another's happiness, if one did not think it right to avoid pain and be happy oneself?

(3) While it is true that "conduct which issues from regard for sanctions is not morality", nevertheless expectation of reward or punishment may serve to counteract the temptation which would otherwise be too strong for the yet unformed character of one of Christ's "little ones". If the temptation prevailed, it would be stronger and the will feebler on another occasion. But if it is just defeated with the make-weight of a sanction, the contrary will take place. Eventually the moral will should become powerful enough and the temptation feeble enough for the former to defeat the latter without any thoughts of joy or woe to come.

(4) Rewards and punishments, both in expectation and in experience, impress the mind with the authority of moral laws and principles. Public honours and legal punishments help to mould the moral sense of the ordinary loyal and patriotic citizen. The revelation of Divine sanctions has naturally a much more powerful influence upon the conscience of believers. The expected or the experienced joy or grief is symbolic or sacramental in its operation; it impresses the personality with the validity and majesty of moral principles and the will of God.

(5) The rewards which Jesus holds out consist very largely of higher or sublimated satisfactions of human instincts. As

¹ "Unprofitable" is not in the Syriac-Sinaitic version.

we have seen, He called for the acquisitive instinct to be diverted from earthly to heavenly wealth, and the craving for approval and honour to be directed away from worldly people towards Christ and God. Unless such alternative objects and outlets were provided, obedience to the more exacting claims of Christianity, however wonderful in self-sacrifice and endurance, would be liable to be strained and over-ascetic. The rewards which Jesus conjoins to His demands conduce to personal harmony, and therefore to effectiveness.

(6) Our Lord discouraged His followers from looking for any special reward. This is noticeable in His answer to the sons of Zebedee: "The cup that I drink ye shall drink; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: but to sit on My right hand or on My left hand is not Mine to give: but is for them for whom it hath been prepared by My Father." For the disciples to have expected special pre-eminence in return for special services and sacrifices would indeed have been to sully their devotion and heroism with an admixture of pride and self-seeking. The very vagueness of our idea of Heaven is probably an advantage in keeping our good motives pure.

(7) We may, I think, regard Our Lord's sanctions as predominantly inward, referring to states of the soul, whether happy or the reverse. But, more than that, they are specially connected with the virtue or the vice of which they are the consequences. Dives, who had become used to bodily self-indulgence and contemptuously ignored the beggar at his gate, finds himself parched with thirst and craving for relief at the hands of the same beggar. The proud leaders of the Jews are warned of their mortification and humiliation when they see, not only the patriarchs, but multitudes from all quarters, in the Kingdom of Heaven, and find themselves excluded. On the other hand, Our Lord more than once suggests that the reward of good work efficiently done will be more work, of a more important and responsible character, to suit the ability that has developed through diligent and faithful service: "If ye have

not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" "Well done, thou good servant: because thou wast found faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities." This representation of punishments and rewards as intrinsic to vices and virtues makes vice appear its own punishment and virtue its own reward.

(8) We should not overlook the plural number in Christ's promise of the highest good: "Ye shall be perfect," "Ye shall be sons of the Most High." "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." We are invited to look forward to the realization of life's ideal in common. It is a Christlike sentiment when we make this proviso: "Only if those I love attain heavenly bliss will it be bliss for me."

(9) The highest goodness is the highest good. This is implied by Jesus when He encourages men by loving their enemies to become sons of their Father in Heaven, and so to attain the perfection which is God's. Good as means is thus in essence the same as good as end. The highest altruism is, therefore, the highest egoism. The reward is the conduct as it fulfils itself. Yet it remains true that we shall not attain the reward if we make it our primary object. It will come to us only if we "seek first God's Kingdom and righteousness".

These considerations should provide an answer to the doubt whether Jesus did not invite men to tarnish the purity of their motives by encouraging them to think of the happiness to which righteous conduct would lead them. Was He not right to make allowances for the frailties and imperfections of human nature, trying to get the best out of everybody, even though in the beginning it might be a poor best? He provided for the "little ones", for the timid and tender converts and seekers after God, and for those still suffering from the effects of past sin. He also demanded of those able to give it the most heroic self-sacrifice and endurance. And He set before all the very highest ideal when He spoke the words "sons of God", "love", "perfect". He knew that God leads souls on from stage to stage, and that in their Divinely ordered growth desires and motives and

faculties will take their due place in the spiritual unity of complete human personality.

What we have remarked about the promises and warnings of rewards and punishments will throw light upon the actual experience of these in their effect upon character. In so far as a reward is not a rest from the practice of the virtue, but the development of the virtue in more favourable circumstances, it is obvious that it will make for moral progress. The life to which Christian conduct leads is a life which can only be sustained by the continuance, and, indeed, the intensification of, that conduct. This is so even in the case of virtues which seem to belong to the stage of struggle against evil: humility, for instance, will attain its fruition in the fellowship of the saints in beatitude.

Though the threat of punishments was easier to understand than the offer of rewards, yet the effect of punishments is, perhaps, more difficult to understand than the effect of rewards. But because punishments are, as Our Lord's illustrations suggest, very largely intrinsic to the sins that have occasioned them, they will be more effective against those sins. They may be regarded as following naturally upon changes of environment. For sins or vices require special and more or less artificial environments to produce a sense of satisfaction. Extravagant self-indulgence in sensuous pleasures normally depends on fairly elaborate apparatus, such as wealth can provide, for gratifying the appetites in a luxurious manner. Pride demands the presence of inferior and admiring persons. Even in earthly existence self-indulgence is punished when the gourmand finds himself in straitened circumstances, and the haughty aristocrat is reduced to consort on equal terms with the vulgar mob. Death constitutes such a removal from an environment in which sin may be pleasant to one in which it can but produce the torments of unsatisfied cravings. So apparently it was with Dives. The coming of the Kingdom of Heaven would constitute a similar change of environment for the arrogant "sons of the Kingdom" (Matt. viii, 11, 12).

We may similarly interpret the dooms uttered against the prosperous and luxurious and frivolous recorded by St. Luke: "Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you, ye that are full now! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you, ye that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep." Death removes them into a state in which the hypertrophied cravings will remain, but there will be no facilities for gratifying them. Thus the sin indulged in for the sake of a particular kind of satisfaction is found to produce its directly opposite kind of dissatisfaction. A long continuance of this may be supposed to react upon the sinful tendency itself by a sort of turning inwards of the thwarted desire. This would well be represented under the metaphors of fire and worm, which probably Our Lord derived from the current Jewish eschatology. Thus to those who have the intelligence to understand, the teaching of Our Lord on punishment in another world is full of hope.

CHAPTER XV

FORGIVENESS

THERE can be no disputing the ethical importance of forgiveness, since by means of it the estrangement resulting from sin is brought to an end and the sinful tendency checked. Forgiveness, it need hardly be said, is prominent in Our Lord's teaching, both God's forgiveness and men's forgiveness. Subsequent Christianity has taken immense—indeed, some might think, judging by the standard of the Gospels, even a disproportionate—interest in forgiveness. And yet the notion of it has not been usually well-defined. In common usage it seems to include both remission of penalty and restoration to Divine favour, together with deliverance from sinful habit and the ultimate salvation of the soul. Moreover, in theology the doctrine of Divine forgiveness is intimately connected with the doctrine of the Atonement. Yet sayings of Christ can be found which apparently represent it as conditional solely on repentance and on the offender's forgiveness of those who have wronged him or are in debt to him. Considerable analysis seems required to obtain clear ideas on the subject.

There are two words in English with allied but distinguishable meanings: pardon and forgiveness. The former is perhaps the more dignified term; the latter suggests greater intimacy and tenderness. A king pardons a subject; a parent forgives a child. When a king pardons a criminal he remits the penalty to which the latter has rendered himself liable. When a father forgives his child, he receives him back into loving intimacy. God is to men both King and Father, and at least, if we believe that He punishes, we may think of Him as both pardoning and forgiving in the senses defined. If He punishes and then restores to intimacy, He may be said to have refused to pardon but to have forgiven. In any case, refusal to pardon by no means prevents subsequent restoration to the affectionate intercourse which characterizes the relation of parent and child. Thus the great

prophet of the exile proclaims that Israel has received double for all her sins and may forthwith expect God's loving care (Isa. xl. 1-11).

To some extent forgiveness in the sense of pardon, or remission of penalty, seems to be intended in the teaching of Our Lord, especially where He speaks of refusal of forgiveness. The implication is apparently that the recalcitrant sinner must undergo considerable punishment before he becomes fit for restoration to the normal life of God's children. This liability to punishment is spoken of as debt in the following: "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"; the parable of the Unmerciful Servant; the advice to make haste to come to terms with an opponent because, once in prison, "thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing". Dean Rashdall suggests this interpretation of the "unpardonable sin": "One who has suffered the full punishment due to his sin has not, in the obvious sense of the word, been forgiven."¹ In any case, it is absurd to press the Gospel words on this subject as implying that the soul that has once committed this offence will incalculable æons hence be still undergoing punishment for it.

But God's punishment seems, from various indications in the Gospels (for instance, the distress of the prodigal son in a distant land and the phrase "outer darkness"), to consist very much in separation from Him. So far as that is so pardon is included in forgiveness; and it is surely in agreement with the general tenor of the Christ's teaching that we should seek to understand God's dealings with men on the analogy of the dealings of parents with their children rather than on the analogy of those of kings with their subjects. First, however, let us consider what forgiveness is between two men of comparatively equal status.

We will imagine two individuals, A and B, on terms of intimate friendship. B, for some reason or no reason, acts in a manner which hurts A. This may be either a direct affront or

¹ *Conscience and Christ*, p. 299.

injury to A, such as a deliberate fraud, or offensive behaviour like drunkenness.

The first impulse in A is to retaliate, but, on reflection, he refrains and contents himself with a reproach and a warning. B before long commits the offence again. A then sees nothing for it but to tell B he can be friends with him no longer till he shows evidence of real repentance.

A is deeply concerned about B, but he sees that to ignore his misconduct would not only damage his own position in the world, but also be to condone, and therefore to encourage, the misconduct both in B and in others. He hopes that B, perhaps through experience of the natural consequences of his misbehaviour, will some day come to see the error of his ways and return to ask A's help.

Time goes on, and B gets himself into worse trouble. A writes to him, telling him he will overlook the past and do what he can to re-establish him in decent society, if he makes up his mind once and for all to give up his bad ways. But B, though he realizes his mistake, cannot for a while face the humiliation of returning to A.

At last the misery B has brought upon himself awakens his moral sense, and he begins to be not merely regretful but ashamed. At first he shrinks from troubling A, but he soon comes to see that A, better than anyone else, can get him out of his difficulties and in particular help him to overcome the vicious habits which he has allowed to master him. So B responds to A's invitation and comes back to him thoroughly penitent. It costs him dear, not only in having to give up and contend against pernicious habits, but in the self-humiliation of having to admit to himself and others that he has done wrong and foolishly. This mortification of his self-respect is naturally and rightly painful, since one with small self-respect could hardly possess that tenacity of purpose which is essential to steady work and noble endeavours. But he accomplishes it by playing his submissive instinct against his assertive, which results in a reformation of the latter on the side of right.

So B returns to A, confesses his wrong-doing, and beseeches A to help him as he has offered. A, being wholly motivated by regard for B and seeing that B will have the best chance for moral recovery under his care, welcomes him back into friendship and companionship. He perceives that B is conscience-stricken and ashamed, but, aware of the power of vicious habit, thinks that it will be safer for B if for a while he lives under his close supervision.

This is at considerable cost to A. He has to subdue a lurking feeling of resentment against a friend who has so shamefully imposed on him. Moreover, B's long indulgence in vice has left its mark on him, making him actually repulsive to one of moral sensitiveness. Further, his reclamation will take time and trouble. But, if B is aware of this, he can hardly fail to be grateful, and this gratitude for A's kindness and self-sacrifice, so contrary to his deserts, will act as a powerful incentive for resisting inclinations to relapse and for engaging in occupations pleasing to A.

A, if he is wise, will discourage B, once he has manifested a proper abhorrence of his misconduct, from continuing to lament over it, seeing that evil, when loathed and dreaded, can exercise a fatal fascination. He will rather turn B's attention to the future and the opportunities it holds out of serving others. He will encourage him "to forget those things which are behind and to press forward".

Out of B's lapse and his recovery with A's assistance there may arise a closer and warmer friendship between the two, and B may rise to moral heights and undertake noble enterprises of which he was before quite incapable. Yet this does not warrant us in taking the attitude to sin expressed in the well-known words: "Let us do evil that good may come." If B had withstood his temptations in time past and never left A's side, he would probably have been drawn then into deeper intimacy with him, with greater participation in his aims and ideals, so that his progress would have been speedier, especially as there would have been less to undo and less hindrance. For it is some

time before past errors cease to be a drag on the soul's movement upwards and onwards.

The understanding of Divine things is facilitated by a study of their earthly counterparts. The salient features of the process of forgiveness among men, including what leads up to it and what follows from it, will be found to correspond with those of God's forgiveness of men as revealed in the message of Jesus. I have purposely chosen an illustration of a general kind to show that forgiveness is essentially the same wherever it occurs; but the kind of illustration that Our Lord Himself adopted, of a father forgiving his son, more nearly resembles God forgiving a human being, in that the one who forgives is definitely in a position of superiority to the one forgiven, and the one forgiven more dependent for life and welfare upon the one who forgives. It thus approximates more to God's forgiveness of man, and enables us to discern the religious, as distinct from the merely moral, factor involved in it. Even when an equal forgives an equal there are two goods and two evils. There is the good of their friendship and association, which is interrupted and renewed; and there is the evil of their temporary separation and antagonism. There is also the good consisting in the good conduct of the offender both before his offence and afterwards; and there is the evil constituted by his offence or misconduct. Each of these goods promotes the other, and each of these evils promotes the other. The friendship helps to maintain the good conduct for a while, and its renewal by forgiveness restores it. Also the good conduct is a condition both of the maintenance of the friendship and of its renewal. The misconduct causes the separation; or possibly, the separation occurring first, the misconduct arises more easily. Normally the restored good is more stable than it was before. There is a stronger determination to good behaviour, supported by a firmer friendship, with deeper sympathy and mutual understanding. The sustaining and regenerating potency of friendship, especially friendship recovered by repentance and forgiveness, is greater in proportion as the one who does not

go astray is a greater personality than the other, such as a good and wise parent in his dealings with a weak and wayward child.

When the two concerned in forgiveness are God and a human soul, the two goods are, first, spiritual intercourse, maintained on the human side by religion; secondly, moral goodness. The two opposite evils are respectively alienation from God, which may be due to lack of religion or false religion or obstinacy in sin, and moral badness or sin. Spiritual intercourse with God both promotes and is promoted by moral goodness. Its absence both causes and is caused by moral badness. The essence of God's forgiveness is that He receives back into spiritual intercourse those who have sinned, in virtue, not of their having become righteous again, but of their longing to become righteous through His aid. It is repentance, not recovered goodness, which forms the contact between God and one of His erring children. The sinner is restored into fellowship with his Heavenly Father while still corrupt and prone to sin, and in that fellowship receives that spiritual aid whereby in course of time he will be delivered from his sinful tendencies and become righteous. Divine forgiveness is what human forgiveness is at its best, the receiving back into intimacy those who have repented of, but are not yet cured of, their sin, with a view to effecting that cure through love.¹

We will now survey various aspects of forgiveness as they appear in the Gospels.

(1) The majority of the human race Jesus spoke of as being in a parlous and perilous condition: "For wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many be they that enter in thereby." This need not imply destruction for ever, nor the worst form of Gehenna, but a more or less

¹ Dr. H. R. Mackintosh, in his excellent book, *The Christian Experience of Forgiveness*, put this very well: "The forgiveness of God . . . signifies that despite this sin against which His indignation flames, as it must if the world's pillars are not to be based on rottenness, the Father takes the amazing step of receiving sinful men into His life of fellowship, that within that life there may be actualized in them His purpose of a loving brotherhood" (p. 32). "What forgiveness in the specifically Christian sense does is to establish communion between God and forgiven men" (p. 37).

miserable residence in Sheol after death. He was sorry for mankind drifting helplessly: "When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd"; "the lost sheep of the house of Israel", as He called them. Their malady was, not only moral, but religious, as words in St. John imply: "Ye know neither Me nor My Father." St. Paul attributed moral degradation to neglect of religion: "Knowing God, they glorified Him not as God, neither gave thanks. . . . Wherefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to uncleanness." The whole world, in spite of some goodness here and there, was in a condition of sin, missing the way to the real values of life, as the word *ἀμαρτάνειν* implies—a state which, in the mind of Jesus, called for pity more than for anger.

(2) The purpose of God to deliver mankind out of this wretchedness and peril through forgiveness is a direct consequence of His nature of love. As Jesus taught, God loves all men, sending His sunshine and rain upon the good and bad alike. But His love for the bad, who because of their badness are separated from Him, prompts Him to efforts to annihilate that separation and bring them into communion with Himself—that is, to forgive them. The parables of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin, though in a way less human than that of the Prodigal Son, do, as that does not explicitly, teach the efforts of God to recover those who have strayed from His presence.

(3) Jesus displayed God's compassionate love for sinners by His personal demeanour towards them. In fraternizing with the vulgar, the immoral, and those who followed the unpatriotic trade of collecting taxes for the idol-worshipping conquerors of the Elect People of God, He acted His Heavenly Father's tenderness for them. He attempted thereby to show that God was desirous of helping them to a better life. Sinners, just because their condition is worse, require succour more than do the morally upright. The direct reaction of love to sin is a

compassionate eagerness to help. Sin and disease are in this on a par. As Jesus trenchantly puts it: "They that are well have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." God regards sin as others regard bodily ailments, namely, as a terrible affliction calling for speedy and drastic remedies. The chief remedy is forgiveness, in the sense defined.

(4) The condition for obtaining forgiveness is usually considered to be repentance. This is rather implied than definitely stated in the recorded words of Jesus; though He did say that man was to forgive his brother man if he repented (Luke xvii. 3). But what do the words "repent" and "repentance" (μετανοεῖν, μετάνοια) signify? The usual interpretation is "change of mind". But this has been disputed, for instance by Dr. Wrede: "The correct translation of μετάνοια in the New Testament is not 'change of mind' but 'penitence' (turning round, conversion; in some circumstances also, amendment and regret)."¹ That penitence is an element in repentance we need not dispute, seeing that we have Our Lord's own words: "They would have repented (μετενόησαν) long ago in sackcloth and ashes." On the other hand, that it was the main idea does not accord with the general impression we may gather from the usage of the New Testament. The word for mere sorrow for the past is rather μεταμέλεσθαι, which is used of Judas when he "repented himself" (Matt. xxvii. 3). The sense of moral and religious reform accords better with Our Lord's opening call: "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." What "repentance" involves may be gathered from the principles of living enunciated in the Sermon on the Mount. On the whole, we may endorse the words of Matthew Arnold:—

We translate it (*metanoia*) "repentance", the mourning and lamenting for our sins; and we translate it wrong. Of *metanoia*, as Jesus used the word, the lamenting one's sins was a small part; the main part was something far more active and fruitful, the setting up an immense new inward movement for obtaining the rule of life. And *metanoia* accordingly is a *change of the inner man*.²

¹ *Zeitschrift für N.T. Wissenschaft*, vol. i, p. 66—my translation.

² *Literature and Dogma*, chap. vii.

Similarly, the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*:—

Jesus regards the piety of this age as fundamentally perverted and moving on false lines. A far-reaching reconstruction of the spiritual life is imperative. His word, "Repent ye", is a summons to build on new foundations, to develop a new consciousness, out of which would come a new nature.¹

But if repentance means so much, is it not rather a consequence than a precursor of forgiveness? The building on new foundations, and the development of a new consciousness or conscience, can only be satisfactorily undertaken by those who have entered into fellowship with God. The prodigal son must have done all this rather after than before his return home. Broadly speaking, we may say that repentance and forgiveness grow *pari passu*, full forgiveness being only won by full repentance in the sense described above. If we look at the double process more in detail, penitence and the desire to amend—to refer to this parable again—preceded and led up to the son's act of throwing himself on his father's mercy; this called forth his father's forgiveness and welcome; but we may suppose that his father's favour would depend on his diligence and continued reform afterwards. This is analogous to the religious experience of forgiveness. Though God is doubtless working on the soul from the beginning, nevertheless contrition and the desire to turn over a new leaf normally precede the actual vivid consciousness of forgiveness, and this in turn promotes repentance in the full New Testament sense—moral and spiritual reconstruction and development.

That sorrow for the past properly constitutes or characterizes one stage in repentance appears from the story of the woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee, who wept over the feet of Jesus, and from His description of the publican smiting on his breast and saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner". But—to refer once again to the parable of the Prodigal—the father cuts short his boy's self-accusation and humiliation with ardent

¹ Article on "Repentance".

embraces and exclamations of joy and welcome, and then proceeds to hold a party in his honour.¹

(5) But Our Lord spoke of another condition of forgiveness as absolutely indispensable, namely, that the sinner should forgive others: "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Once He makes it even more emphatic. After the grim parable of the Unmerciful Servant, with its terrifying allusion to torture, He adds: "So shall also My Heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts." It must be forgiveness *ex animo*; not merely outward friendliness, but also feelings of kindly good will towards the offender. It is almost as if the forgiveness of others were more essential than repentance as a condition of procuring forgiveness. This at least we may affirm—that it is more important than sorrow for the past.

The reason should be obvious on reflection. To offer forgiveness to one who refused to forgive others would be to condone, nay, to encourage, a flagrant iniquity. For to accept forgiveness for oneself while denying it to others would be to behave with extravagant egoism—the egoism of claiming a privileged position in the Universe, not even on account of any merit, but simply because "I am I". It would be an expression of the same arrogance which domineers over and crushes others to the self-centred will of the agent. To forgive one who adopted that attitude would be practically to encourage that wicked pride. True repentance—that is, aversion from sin and desire for goodness—includes the forgiving temper.

But we are not asked to forgive the unrepentant. In one

¹ Apparently the prodigal had learnt off by heart the words with which he would meet his father, so as to be certain of getting it quite correct in the confusion of the moment. According to the English Version he does not get as far in the actual encounter as the proposal that he should be taken on as one of the farm-hands. This is a delightfully human touch. In some MSS., including the Sinaitic and the Vatican, the words, "make me as one of thy hired servants", are actually said to the father. Most MSS., however, omit them.

passage, indeed, Our Lord seems to counsel no little strictness in receiving back the offender: "If thy brother sin against thee, go, shew him his fault between thee and him alone; if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church [i.e. the local assembly]; and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican." There is a semblance of severity about this passage, all the more striking in contrast to the parable of the Lost Sheep just before and the injunction to Peter to unlimited forgiveness immediately following. This has caused some critics to question whether Jesus really spoke so. Yet it is inevitable that both individual and church must exercise some discipline over friends and members in the case of more heinous offences, if only by the refusal of fellowship till repentance is fairly obvious. Was not St. Paul, for instance, right in recommending the excommunication of one guilty of a peculiarly horrible crime (1 Cor. v. 1-5)? And the rule, attributed to Our Lord, that one should first try to influence the offender privately, then bring in one or two friends, and then appeal to the local religious association, seems to fulfil the requirements both of mercy and of a high moral standard.

And in following this rule would not man be carrying out the principle which actuates God in dealing with sinners, who surely makes many efforts to bring them to a better mind, but refuses to admit flagrant and obstinate offenders into close spiritual communion with Himself? But the refusal to forgive is quite compatible with the continuance of deep and compassionate love in both God and man for the worst of sinners.¹ We may also carry the comparison farther, and say that just as small faults unrepented of should not be deemed an adequate ground for the severance of friendly relations or excommunication, so they do not exclude from spiritual fellowship with God in the way that worse forms of wickedness do. Probably the

¹ *Vide* p. 21 on forgiveness in *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*.

right conduct for man in dealing with his fellows resembles more closely the way in which God deals with man than we have been wont to realize.

(6) But is there not yet another factor in the moral attitude which wins Divine forgiveness? For it was by faith that St. Paul declared we are to be justified or acquitted. Our Lord, however, seems to have required faith as a condition rather of healing than of pardon. Yet we remember His concluding words to the woman who had been a sinner in the house of Simon: "Thy faith hath saved thee [made thee whole]; go in peace." Perhaps this was because He viewed her former plight as a malady of which by her own unaided efforts she could not cure herself, rather than as a sinful manner of life which she had deliberately pursued. This further suggests that the doctrine of justification by faith was elaborated over against the consciousness of the weakness of the will in conflict with sin (as described in Rom. vii), faith being regarded as supplementing penitence, which by itself may have seemed to St. Paul ineffectual. Moreover, faith, as he used the word, included self-devotion to the Person of the Crucified, and therefore stood for the active element in repentance. But Our Lord does more than once indicate the need for confidence or assurance in the return of the penitent to God. When He said to the man sick of the palsy, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee", was not this with a view of assuring him that his repentance was accepted? The prodigal son had sufficient trust in his father's good nature to venture back, however timidly, to his old home. It was faith rather than penitence which Jesus endeavoured to elicit in those gracious words: "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden." But why should faith, in this sense, be necessary at all to bring the sinner to God? Why should not He lovingly address and comfort any who sincerely abhor their sinfulness and crave for amendment, as we suppose any decent parent would an obviously penitent child? Here we approach the mystery of God's relation to man. God does not yet so clearly manifest Himself to the ordinary, non-spiritual man as

to remove all hindrances from fear and doubt. There is a veil which it needs faith to pierce. But since repentance implies devotion to the merciful God, it may be deemed to include what Jesus meant by "faith".

(7) Next as to forgiveness itself. We considered the notion of pardon or remission of penalty as one possible aspect of the Gospel teaching on forgiveness. But it is rather from the sins themselves than from their penalty or consequences that Christ delivers according to the New Testament, as it was said to Joseph about Him: "He shall save His people from their sins." Connected with the idea of "saving" is that of "releasing". So Dr. Swete: "The word which the New Testament usually employs to represent the forgiveness of sins (*ἄφεσις*) signifies remission rather than pardon. It emphasizes not so much the mercy which forgives as the release which leaves the sinner at liberty to serve God."¹ Another word, *χαρίζεσθαι*, which is once used in the Gospels (Luke vii. 42), and several times by St. Paul, to imply forgiveness, means literally to treat kindly. It suggests the soothing and comforting and restoring association of the Heavenly Father with one of His children, sore and enfeebled by sin and its consequences. But the most adequate representation of forgiveness in the teaching of Jesus is surely the welcome which the father gives to the prodigal son; and this may be identified with that reception into sonship to God and life in the Spirit that St. Paul declares to be the state of those who are freed from sin and death (Rom. viii. 1-9).

(8) We may suppose that the gratitude of the prodigal son at his father's generous reception constituted a powerful motive against any relapse. Our Lord also associates gratitude with forgiveness in the parable of the Two Debtors: "Which of them therefore will love him the more?" He then proceeds to make a humorous, yet intensely serious, application of this, when he contrasts his host's neglect of the usual courtesies with the penitent woman's passionate display of affection. Then follow

¹ *The Forgiveness of Sins*, p. 81. Cf. Moulton and Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the New Testament*, *ἄφεσις*,

the beautiful but perplexing words: "Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much." This by itself would naturally signify that her love had procured forgiveness. And we might support this by reference to other teaching of Our Lord indicating that God's love is given more fully in response to love both for Him and for others. When we are struggling with some recurrent temptation, yielding again and again, in spite of repeated penitence and resolution, we would succeed better if we substituted for some of this a few deeds of self-denying kindness, giving more of our wealth and leisure to the alleviation of poverty and distress. Yet if we attend to the context we must interpret the words differently. Jesus is telling Simon that all this display of affection is an evident proof that the woman has been released from the sins which bound her to a sordid routine of vice and shame. It seems also implied that no one could be so affectionate to Christ whose heart was still set on evil. He defends the woman from the charge of immorality and Himself from that of blindness to her wickedness, as if He spoke thus: "You accuse me of allowing a bad woman to caress me. I tell you she is not a bad woman any longer. She is pure and good, having put away her unsavoury career for ever. It is not I, but you, who lack insight into character. Her demonstrations of affection for me prove that she is now good, to anyone who understands human nature."

(9) The natural outcome of being forgiven is service. He who merely dared to hope to be taken on as one of his father's farm labourers, doubtless did not shirk resuming his old tasks along with his elder brother. Christ expected the people He helped to become helpers in their turn. "Thus Matthew, the tax-collector, and Mary Magdalene, 'from whom seven devils had gone out', both became His devoted fellow-workers. Peter too was thus exhorted: 'When once thou hast turned again, strengthen thy brethren.'"¹

(10) What of the claim for human participation in Divine

¹ *Civilization Remade by Christ*, p. 110.

forgiveness, that either church or priest or saint may mediate God's forgiveness to man? We recall that Our Lord said to the sick of the palsy, "Son, thy sins are forgiven", so doubtless bringing peace to a troubled heart and facilitating the subsequent cure. The Scribes mentally object: "What does the man mean by talking like this? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins, who but God alone?" (Moffatt). Thereupon Jesus, by miraculously healing the man, endeavours to convince them that "the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins". Seeing that at the time He was concealing His claims to be the Messiah, we may gather that it was in His human capacity that He pronounced absolution. This seems supported by the remark in St. Matthew's record of the incident: "The multitudes . . . glorified God, who had given such power unto men." We read that He spoke similarly to the woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee: "Thy sins are forgiven." Whereat "they that sat at meat with Him began to say within themselves, Who is this that even forgiveth sins?" But does this mean that Our Lord actually forgave these people their sins, or that He merely conveyed to them the information that God had forgiven their sins? After all, He is not recorded as saying, "I forgive thee thy sins". But in that case why should the on-lookers object so vehemently and profess to think that He was forgiving sins in His own person? An intermediate interpretation may be suggested. He saw that these sinners were sufficiently ashamed of what they had done to be ready for forgiveness; but not knowing the mercy of God they did not open their hearts in faith and penitence to Him. Jesus, by assuring them that God was willing to forgive them, induced them to do this; whereupon they became conscious of the Divine Presence, healing and sanctifying. This function of mediating forgiveness may, proportionately to their spiritual knowledge and insight, be exercised by saintly men and women, whether singly or in conjunction. To this agrees the saying of the Risen Christ in the Fourth Gospel: "Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins

ye retain, they are retained." But it is not only by means of words, assuring or reproving, that this office is to be exercised, but also by the admission to or refusal of fellowship.

It must be that this mediation is in human hands far from infallible. Some practices which are wrong may be condoned; some which are innocent, reproved. And it is possible to be too severe, or too lenient: to demand more sorrow than is appropriate for small offences and frailties, and to fail to recognize genuine contrition; or, on the contrary, to be satisfied with mild regret and simulated abhorrence for serious offences and perverse inclinations. The former fault in the confessor tends to make the penitent over-harsh towards others and over-serious in his demeanour. The latter fault is liable to leave moral scars and warps in the penitent's soul, which may take long in disappearing. Either mistake tends to impede the penitent's attainment of communion with God. Yet this is not to deny the right, and indeed duty, of one man to say to another: "Thy sins are forgiven thee". For it is one of the privileges of the children of God that they should lead one another by the hand into the presence of their Eternal Father.

(11) But is there not one more indispensable condition of being forgiven by God, namely, faith in the Atonement wrought by Christ? And yet the doctrine that God should require, in order to forgive men, the sacrifice of His Son, or any sacrifice save that of a contrite heart, seems to conflict, not only with the general tenor of the Old Testament, but with the plain statements of Jesus Himself and the parables which He told to illustrate forgiveness. And yet how came it that St. Paul saw in Christ crucified his only hope of salvation?

We may be perfectly certain that the Heavenly Father revealed to us by Jesus always did and always will love His enemies, so long as there are such, and try to save them from their sins. God is love from all and to all eternity.

But though the sacrifice of Christ could not make God more eager to forgive, yet it has made men more able to repent. It does display goodness and wickedness in violent contrast

with one another, and reveal the compassionate will of God to transform evil souls into good. By so doing it stimulates and draws men to abhor their wickedness, and to seek to become good in the loving Presence of their Almighty Father. As Dr. Mackintosh puts it: "The Cross reveals in a final and unmistakable way God's mind regarding sin and His active attitude towards it."¹ Thus Christ by dying on the Cross has made the forgiveness of God wider and deeper than it was before. We may understand better now why St. Paul emphasizes faith rather than repentance as necessary for salvation; for "faith" is his word for the response to and acceptance of Christ's sacrifice as the act of God whereby He draws men to repentance.

(12) What, then, are we to make of such phrases as this: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin"? This seems to carry us beyond any conception of the Atonement as a revelation, however stupendous. When Our Lord spoke of Himself as about to become a "ransom for many", it is, no doubt, possible, but hardly obvious, to suppose that He meant that He was about to deliver men from sin by displaying at once its dreadfulness and the forgiving love of God. In any case, we must not overlook the personal power of "Him that liveth and was dead" to unite sinful men to the Universal Father. Surely His personal experience of human misery and wickedness has rendered Him a more efficient Agent of the Almighty in overcoming and annihilating them. The potency of self-chosen suffering in the succour that one human being gives to another seems to afford some warrant for so thinking of Christ's self-sacrifice.

More precisely, I suggest that we may express the efficacy of the Atonement in some such way as this. Christ experienced sin in its most evil form, namely, malignant cruelty. It acted upon His consciousness as a strong temptation to avoid it—to escape the suffering by flight, or else, as He implied that He could, by summoning the hosts of Heaven to deliver Him

¹ *The Christian Experience of Forgiveness*, p. 201.

from His enemies. But this would have been to have done something less than His utmost in the deliverance of mankind, including those actuated by this malignity against Him, from their pitiable and terrible condition, their moral and spiritual disease. It would have been virtually to take sides with the cruelty. But He overcame the temptation in love—love for God in His loving purposes, love for mankind in their miserable plight. The two opposing volitions—hate and love—came into close and violent conflict in His consciousness. And love won. And this intense experience, of love vanquishing hate, abiding in Christ's mind, He communicates to human beings in their struggles with sin, and so enables them to gain a like victory.

But, whatever the explanation, we cannot doubt that the will of God to forgive and to save springs unfailingly from His eternal love.

CHAPTER XVI

CONSCIENCE AND GRACE

I

WHAT can be gathered from the Gospels as to how to know right from wrong? To the orthodox Jew the method was fairly obvious: it was the revealed Law of God embodied in Scripture with the interpretations made by the accredited teachers of the nation. This tended to casuistry—that is, the formulation of rules to cover all possible cases. As we have seen, Our Lord enunciated principles, not rules, and left men to apply them according to circumstances. He left it to individuals to discern the right course of action in concrete particulars.

We read that He taught “with authority, and not like the Scribes”. He gave the impression of speaking as if He saw the truth, with the authentic voice of revelation, declaring the grand principles of life. Did He not also hope to bring His hearers to see the truth as He saw it? For surely His condemnation of evil desires as well as evil acts, His proclamation of the love that embraces foreigners and enemies, His call for absolute trust in God, awoke and still awakes a congenital insight in human nature that bears independent witness to the eternal validity of these pronouncements. To those who have insight there is no need for thunderings and lightnings on Mount Sinai, or for any miracle or sign from Heaven.

“Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?”—this saying of Jesus implies some innate human power of moral judgment. So also do the words in St. John: “Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment.” Our Lord manifestly believed in what we may call “conscience”, to use that word in its broadest sense, as the consciousness of right and wrong, moral value and evil.¹ That He was prepared to recognize conscience in heathens may be

¹ *The Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* gives this rather elaborate definition of “conscience”: “The consciousness of moral worth or its

inferred from the description of the judgment of the nations (Matt. xxv. 31 ff.), as St. Paul also did in the well-known passage where he speaks of the Gentiles showing "the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith" (Rom. ii. 15). The word for conscience (*συνείδησις*) does not occur in the Gospels, except in one passage where it has doubtful manuscript authority, and has been omitted in the English Revised Version: "being convicted by their conscience", of the men who brought to Jesus the woman taken in adultery; but it is implied there in any case, and also when the strict Sabbatarians were rebuked by Jesus just after the healing of the woman with spinal curvature: "And as He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame."

Our Lord evidently regarded conscience as integral to human nature, and capable of development by means of instruction and exercise. That He thought of it as comparatively sensitive in children and simple people, but liable to be sophisticated by misguided education and worldly influences, appears from His commendation of children and certain words addressed to His Heavenly Father: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and prudent, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it was pleasing in Thy sight." Conscience could become perverted and even blinded or deadened by persistent hypocrisy. On the other hand, He doubtless thought of it as illuminated and developed by the Holy Spirit.

St. Paul used the word "conscience", like the Stoics did, to signify a faculty, more or less distinct from the ordinary judgment, which approves or disapproves of acts, as when he declares his bitter disappointment at the rejection of the Gospel by his fellow-countrymen: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Ghost, that I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my opposite as manifested in character or conduct, together with the consciousness of personal obligation to act in accordance with morality and the consciousness of merit or guilt in acting." The *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* is briefer: "The mind occupied with moral phenomena."

heart.”¹ St. Paul’s use of the word in the General Epistles is fairly consistent. Elsewhere in the New Testament—in the Acts, the Pastoral Epistles of St. Paul, in the Hebrews, in 1 Peter—its significance appears vaguer. This is not the place to discuss modern theories of conscience (Bishop Butler’s, Kant’s, T. H. Green’s, Paulsen’s), or the recent controversy on the subject between Dean Rashdall and Professor McDougall, of whom the former contends for its rationality and objectivity, the latter for its emotional instinctiveness and subjectivity.² Both these aspects seem contained in what Our Lord taught or intimated concerning the power of man both to know and to feel right and goodness on the one hand, and wrong and badness on the other.

II

Allied to the question, how God reveals His will to man, is the question how He enables man to do His will. Now Our Lord certainly thought of God as assisting men in difficulties and temptations, and withal influencing and training them in moral goodness. This help is implied when He speaks of prayer for anyone in temptation: “I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not”—to Peter shortly before the arrest. It is also implied in the doctrine of God’s forgiveness, especially as illustrated by the father’s welcome to the prodigal into affectionate intimacy. It is implicit in the great truth of the Divine Fatherhood. As children live with their parents and converse with them, being continually influenced and moulded by them through personal contact, so should human beings be intimate with their Heavenly Father and be continually influenced and moulded by Him. On the other hand, Our Lord does not speak as if God compelled men to do good

¹ Dr. P. Ewald, *De Voce Συνειδήσεως*, p. 28: “Satis demonstrasse nobis videmur, Paulum in epistola ad Romanos conscripta non aliter usum esse voce συνειδήσεως quam veteres.”

² *Social Psychology*, chaps. vii and viii. *The Theory of Good and Evil*, vol. i, pp. 157 ff. “Is Conscience an Emotion?” by Hastings Rashdall, *Hibbert Journal*, vol. xix.

or become good. He appeals to them to keep certain commandments, to practise certain virtues, to undertake certain tasks, to make sacrifices, as if it lay within their power to do so or not. The Gospel of St. John certainly emphasizes the Divine operation in saving men, as in the following: "No man cometh to Me except the Father draw him." "I kept them in Thy Name which Thou hast given Me." But this Gospel also implies that some may resist God's attraction: "His own received Him not"; and even though given by the Father to Christ, the son of perdition was lost. Our Lord was evidently very far from the doctrine of predestination or irresistible grace.

But how does God communicate with and influence and hold personal intercourse with His human children? Can we discover any light upon this mystery from Our Lord's teaching? We recall how He speaks of the Holy Spirit: "How much more shall the Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him!" The Holy Spirit seems to be the name for that Power whereby God speaks to and touches men. But it is noticeable that Our Lord speaks of the Holy Spirit or the Spirit of God as speaking to or through His followers rather than as operating on or moving them. Thus He tells them not to prepare their speeches when about to be tried by authorities hostile to the Gospel: "for the Holy Spirit shall teach you in that very hour what ye ought to say". Or even more emphatically: "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you." This agrees with the discourses in St. John, in which the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of truth, who shall lead them into all truth and reveal the future. He is also in this discourse called the "Advocate" or "Helper". All this suggests that Our Lord thought of the Holy Spirit as influencing by presenting ideas or by offering aid rather than by exercising any sort of force or pressure on the will. The one kind of aid that He specifies, apart from revelation, is the power to cast out devils: "If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils." We may say generally that Our Lord spoke as if God treats men as beings of moral inde-

pendence, free agents, whom He allows to do as they choose, but whom He assists both by imparting knowledge and by enduing them with wonderful power if their purposes are good. This, of course, is not to deny that God makes His presence felt in more emotional ways—comforting, encouraging, warning—above all, in loving. But apparently, if we attend to Our Lord, God is generally careful not to sway men even by moral pressure. He is great and they are little: yet He respects their individuality and lets them direct their own lives.¹

Nevertheless, the intimacy of God and souls may and should be very close and personal. He converses with them, not normally by communications through the senses, but by inward voices and visions. This communion with God is widely attested by religious people of very different creeds and types of worship. "God is quite real to me. I talk to Him and often get answers"—this is one of the numerous records of religious experience in William James's great book,² and it must be typical of many religious lives; though doubtless to many others God seems to communicate rather through the wordless manifestation of His Presence—mighty, holy, loving, wonderful. Surely something of this nature was implied by Jesus when He spoke of God as the Great Father of men.

How, then, may we account for the lack of infallibility in supposed Divine communications? In an analogous manner, it may be replied, to the way in which we account for fallibility in ordinary communications between man and man. The latter have to pass through the senses; and the eyesight may be dim or distorted, the hearing dull or deceptive. And even when the message is correctly transmitted, the intelligence may misapprehend its purport. Likewise communications from Heaven have to pass through the senses of the soul, and are conveyed in such images or language as these senses

¹ Cp. Professor W. R. Sorley, *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, p. 495: "The Spirit of God is conceived as working in and through the spirit of man, but in such a way as not to destroy human freedom. . . . Love works through freedom."

² *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 1st edition, p. 71.

are capable of transmitting, and even then may be misunderstood. They pass through what psychologists vaguely term "the unconscious", the great psychic basis or envelope of the conscious ego, which is the storehouse of memories more or less recoverable, hidden tendencies, hopes and fears that have dropped or been put out of mind, impressions pleasant or unpleasant of forgotten experiences. It is not always possible to distinguish genuine communications from the spontaneous stirrings of the individual's own soul, nor to determine from what source the former are derived. It rests with the conscious personality to judge between these deliverances in accordance with its own conceptions of truth and good. Moreover, those of extraneous origin are necessarily conveyed in images or language composed of material which the soul has at its command—as we say, symbolically; so that the symbol has to be interpreted. Hence even Divine inspiration may be distorted and confused, and not readily distinguishable from idle imaginings that well up from the individual's psychic abysses, or even perhaps from impressions of other influences that are not holy. Furthermore, as Our Lord insisted, it is possible to become so spiritually blind and deaf that the manifestations and messages of God are blocked. Yet love for God and man will render the soul so holy, so spiritually limpid, that communion with God becomes more intimate and vivid than association with the nearest and most beloved of fellow-creatures in the flesh. So surely it was with Jesus Himself.

It is, then, through personal intimacy, analogous to the intimacy of human beings with one another, yet differing from that in being through the senses of the soul, that God helps and influences human beings in their moral difficulties and endeavours, never compelling but enlightening and gently persuading, and so trains them as His children and fellow-workers. This appears to be the right interpretation of what Jesus taught or implied concerning the aid which God gives to His human children.

CHAPTER XVII

THE MORAL AND THE SPIRITUAL

WE may differentiate three main conceptions of Christ's work for mankind: (1) to bring in or to prepare for the Kingdom of God; (2) to deliver mankind from sin and its consequences; (3) to give or instil into mankind a superior kind of life. We have already considered the relation of His ethics to the two former; it remains to relate them to the last-named. We may frame our question thus: What is the connection between the morality which Jesus taught and the spiritual life with which He is believed to endow them? But, first, how may we conceive of this spiritual life?

The doctrine of the new birth is prominent in certain parts of the New Testament, especially in the writings of St. Paul and in those attributed to a certain John—the so-called Johannine writings, excluding the Apocalypse. According to this doctrine one of the principal works of Christ is to bring souls from a merely human life into a spiritual life, in which they are akin to God and become capable of a glorious immortality. The merely human or natural life men have by inheritance from their human ancestors; the spiritual or divine life they acquire from Christ through attachment to or faith in Him. This St. Paul states very definitely: "That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual. The first man [Adam] is of the earth, earthy: the second man [Christ] is of Heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." The word translated "natural" (*ψυχικός*) might be rendered "psychical", if it were not for the spiritualistic or spiritistic associations of this word. It signifies the nature of man as an intelligent and even moral being, before he has attained to the life to which we give the name "spiritual".

It is what we may call "ordinary human nature". Dr. Moffatt translates it "animate"; but it means this, not merely as the lower animals are animate, but in the richer sense applicable to human beings, involving reason and volition and imagination.

From this lower human life Christ is said to lift or transfer souls to a higher human life for which the name "spiritual" seems most appropriate. "Spiritual" is harder to define, but it may be said to indicate transcendence of the merely human, particularly in respect of communion with Divine Reality—in other words, with God. This communion with God affects the personality and life as a whole, refining it and giving it more control over its conditions and circumstances. But the spiritual life cannot be known by means of any description; but only by experience, by contact with what is spiritual—indeed, only by actually being spiritual. St. Paul asserts or implies that it is in virtue of gaining the spiritual life from Christ that men may attain eternal life, as in the words, "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive".

Earlier in the same Epistle (1 Corinthians) he emphasizes the superior knowledge and understanding inherent in the spiritual life: "We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man." Dr. Moffatt translates the latter part of this as follows: "We interpret what is spiritual in spiritual language. The unspiritual man rejects these truths of the Spirit of God; to him they are 'sheer folly', he cannot understand them. And the reason is, that they must be read with the spiritual eye. The spiritual man, again, can read the meaning of everything; and yet no one can read what he is."

In another Epistle (Romans) St. Paul identifies the spiritual life with sonship to God, and asserts that it involves both freedom from sin and a heavenly life after death. Further, this new life is conveyed by the Spirit of God through Christ—as if Christ were a sort of connecting link between the Heavenly Father and human souls. Thus: “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death.” “If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through His Spirit that dwelleth in you.” “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”

This doctrine of the spiritual life through or in Christ is still more definitely expressed in the Johannine writings. Their author emphasizes even more than does St. Paul that its outcome is eternal life. In a sense, he implies, the saved have eternal life even in this mortal existence; for they have the life which after death will develop into unending life. Evidence of this life is the constant activity of *agape*, spiritual love. So from the First Epistle: “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren.” “God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life.”

It is one of the great problems of New Testament exegesis to determine how far the teaching in the Fourth Gospel is really authentic of Jesus. Most of it is certainly represented as spoken by Him. On the other hand, its wide dissimilarity to the teaching in the Synoptic Gospels, together with its close resemblance to the rest of the Johannine writings, where the author is apparently writing in his own name, has made many scholars believe that it really emanates from the John, whoever he may have been, who wrote the Gospel and the Epistles called after him. Yet on this theory it is still possible to hold that he records a true tradition, having grasped and paid attention to certain aspects of the message of Christ

which escaped others. Be all this as it may, we may content ourselves with observing the differences between the doctrine of the Synoptic and that of the Johannine Jesus, and inquiring whether they really agree.

In the prologue to the Fourth Gospel the doctrine of the new birth into a higher spiritual life, essentially akin to the life of God, is definitely stated: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. . . . He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His Name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." We may paraphrase as follows: The Word of God illuminated mankind in time past, but when He became incarnate in a human body He did much more than this—He enabled men, all such as accepted Him for what He is, to become children of God, of the same essential nature as Himself and His Heavenly Father.

Similarly, in the discourse to Nicodemus, Jesus Himself declares the truth of spiritual rebirth: "Except a man be born anew [or "from above"], he cannot see the Kingdom of God. . . . That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew [or "from above"]. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." This refers to the invisible and mysterious nature of the new birth.

Various aspects of the generation and growth of the new life—all mediated through Christ—are represented symbolically in the discourses in the Fourth Gospel. Spiritual thirst is assuaged by the "living water", the "well of water springing up unto eternal life". Spiritual hunger is satisfied by "the living bread which came down from Heaven". Spiritual vision is enabled by "the light of the world".

Spiritual joy comes from the "good wine", which Christ has reserved. The supreme desire of all—for abundant and abiding life—is fulfilled in "the resurrection and the life". All of these are or spring from Jesus Christ Himself. Hence He says: "I am come that ye might have life, and have it to the full." And the central purpose of the Incarnation is thus expressed by the Evangelist: "That believing ye may have life in His Name."

With all this accords the great saying of the Second Epistle of Peter: "He hath granted unto us His precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the Divine nature." It is to render us partakers of the Divine nature that the Son of God came into the world, taught, suffered, died, and rose.

In order to get the philosophical and theological bearings of this I venture to refer to two once famous books of an eminent religious thinker, in which he puts forward two apparently contrary, if not contradictory, views of the life which the Christian has through Christ. These two books are *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* and *The Ascent of Man*, by Henry Drummond. The present writer confesses that both these volumes stirred him profoundly in his early years and set him thinking.

In *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* the transition from the natural, or merely human, to the spiritual man, who is in the full sense a child of God, is compared to the transition from the inanimate to the animate. Henry Drummond contended that as science indicates that the inanimate can never develop into the animate, but must have life infused into it if it is to become animate, so does Christianity teach that the natural man can never grow into the spiritual man, but must be born spiritually of God, if he is to become spiritual. Accordingly the division between the merely human and the spiritual is analogous to that between the mineral on the one hand and the organic or animate on the other. To quote his own words;—

In the dim but not inadequate vision of the spiritual world presented in the Word of God, the first thing that strikes the eye is a great gulf fixed. The passage from the natural world to the spiritual world is hermetically sealed on the natural side. The door from the inorganic to the organic is shut, no mineral can open it; so the door from the natural to the spiritual is shut, and no man can open it. This world of natural men is staked off from the spiritual world by barriers which have never been crossed from within. No organic change, no modification of environment, no mental energy, no moral effort, no evolution of character, no progress of civilization can endow any single human soul with the attribute of spiritual life. The spiritual world is guarded from the world next in order beneath it by a law of biogenesis—*except a man be born again . . . except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.*¹

Again:—

It is no spell of ignorance arbitrarily laid upon certain members of the organic kingdom that prevents them reading the secrets of the spiritual world. It is a scientific necessity. No exposition of the case could be more truly scientific than this: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: *neither can he know them*, because they are spiritually discerned."²

Again:—

What now, let us ask specifically, distinguishes a Christian man from a non-Christian man? Is it that he has certain mental characteristics not possessed by the other? Is it that certain faculties have been trained in him, that morality assumes special and higher manifestations and character a nobler form? Is the Christian merely an ordinary man who happens from birth to have been surrounded with a peculiar set of ideas? Is his religion merely that peculiar quality of the moral life defined by Mr. Matthew Arnold as "morality touched by emotion"? And does the possession of a high ideal, benevolent sympathies, a reverent spirit, and a favourable environment account for what men call his spiritual life? The distinction between them is the same as that between the organic and the inorganic, the living and the dead.³

Henry Drummond proceeds to compare the difference between the non-Christian and the Christian (in the sense of the "spiritual man") with that between the stone and the plant, and between vegetable and animal life. Thus:—

¹ *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, p. 71.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 78.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 80, 81.

This plant is tenanted by something new, an original and unique possession added over and above all the properties common to both. When from vegetable life we rise to animal life, here again we find something original and unique—unique at least as compared with the mineral. From animal life we ascend again to spiritual life. And here also is something new, something still more unique. He who lives the spiritual life has a distinct kind of life added to all the other phases of life which he manifests—a kind of life infinitely more distinct than is the active life of a plant from the inertia of a stone. The spiritual man is more distinct in point of fact than is the plant from the stone. This is the one possible comparison in Nature, for it is the widest distinction in Nature; but compared with the difference between the natural and the spiritual the gulf which divides the organic from the inorganic is a hair's-breadth. The natural man belongs essentially to this present order of things. He is endowed simply with a high quality of the natural animal life. But it is life of so poor a quality that it is not life at all. He that hath not the Son *hath not life*; but he that hath the Son hath life—a new and distinct and supernatural endowment. He is not of this world. He is of the timeless state, of eternity. *It doth not yet appear what he shall be.*¹

Henry Drummond proceeds to claim for Christianity that it is the only religion whereby spiritual life can be attained. He puts it as follows:—

Now it is this great law which finally distinguishes Christianity from all other religions. It places the religion of Christ upon a footing altogether unique. There is no analogy between the Christian religion and, say, Buddhism or the Mohammedan religion. There is no true sense in which a man can say, he that hath Buddha hath life. Buddha has nothing to do with life. He may have something to do with morality. He may stimulate, impress, teach, guide, but there is no distinct new thing added to the souls of those who profess Buddhism. These religions *may* be developments of the natural, mental, or moral man. But Christianity professes to be something more. It is the mental or moral man *plus* something else or some One else. It is the infusion into the spiritual man of a new life, of a quality unlike anything else in Nature. This constitutes the separate Kingdom of Christ, and gives to Christianity alone of all the religions of mankind the strange mark of Divinity.²

At the end of the book he inclines to the view that the distinction between the mental and the spiritual is comparable only to that between the inorganic and the organic, there being

¹ *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, pp. 81, 82. ² *Ibid.*, pp. 83, 84.

continuity between the different phases of the organic—vegetable, animal, human:—

Modern science knows only two kingdoms—the inorganic and the organic. A barrier between man and animal there may be, but it is a different barrier from that which separates inorganic from organic. But even were this to be denied, and in spite of all science it will be denied, it would make no difference as regards the general question. It would merely interpose another kingdom between the organic and the spiritual, the other relations remaining as before.¹,,

This emphatic distinction of the spiritual life from the ordinary human life is to some extent reproduced in my own *Meaning of Christianity*. But instead of comparing the gap between the spiritual and the organic to that between the organic and the inorganic, I suggested these three stages of conscious life—the animal, the human or mental, the spiritual or divine. I attempted to support this gradation by means of the psychology of animals according to which the lower animals have a perceptual, but not a conceptual, consciousness. I postulated that spiritual consciousness transcends conceptual consciousness analogously to the way in which conceptual consciousness transcends perceptual consciousness. This seemed to me a better classification of the main orders of life and a truer estimate of the spiritual life mediated by Christ, and for this reason especially, that when the natural man is reborn into spiritual life he remains the same person, or ego, or self, whereas when inanimate matter is assimilated by an animal it can hardly be said to become the animal. Certainly St. Paul wrote, "I, yet not I; but Christ that liveth in me." But it would not be legitimate to press this ardent expression of the consciousness of the break with the past and of being controlled by Christ, so as to signify a contradiction to the belief that the redeemed man himself becomes spiritual. The identical individual that was a merely natural man, living in sin and apart from God, becomes a child of God, a member of Christ, and a partaker of the Holy Spirit.

This conception of successive stages of life, the evolution

¹ *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, pp. 409, 410.

of one stage preparing for the arrival of the next, and the whole series culminating, so far at least as our experience reaches, in the spiritual, receives support from the philosophy of "emergence" expounded by Professor Alexander and Professor Lloyd Morgan. The latter postulates three stages of conscious life—animal, mental, spiritual. He thinks that "spiritual value stands at a higher emergent level than economical, moral, æsthetic, or intellectual values".¹ The mental emerges in the animal, the spiritual emerges in the mental. This agrees with what I wrote:—

Creation is a great process of emergence of reality stage by stage. . . . The physical and the chemical come first into activity, and then later the organic, all constituting the environment of souls. Then souls come into activity—first, their lower consciousness, consisting of sensation and perception, appetite and elementary desire; next conceptual consciousness, with thought and purpose; and then spiritual life.²

But along with the distinctness of spiritual life from lower forms of consciousness, a distinctness so marked that it seems impossible for it to have evolved out of them, but to have been produced by means of a special creative activity, there appears also a continuity and even identity linking the ascending stages of conscious life. This was forcibly maintained by the same Henry Drummond in a subsequent book which he entitled *The Ascent of Man*.

Love is not a late arrival, an afterthought, with Creation. It is not a novelty of a romantic civilization. It is not a pious word of religion. Its roots began to grow with the first cell of life which budded on this earth.³

There is, he points out, an altruism in conscious existence almost from its commencement, showing itself in mating and in maternity and paternity, not without self-sacrifice. "Of what", he inquires, "is maternity the mother?" "Of

¹ *Life, Mind, and Spirit*, p. 291.

² *The Meaning of Christianity*, 2nd edition, pp. 55, 56. It is, however, doubtful whether Professor Lloyd Morgan conceives of "emergence" quite as I understood it and endeavoured to describe it in this book.

³ *The Ascent of Man*, p. 276.

love itself," he answers, "of love as love, of love as life, of love as humanity, of love as the pure and undefiled fountain of all that is eternal in the world."¹

Accordingly Christianity does not so much, as he maintained previously, introduce a new principle into the world as develop the essential principle of all life, which emanates from God and is God.

Up to this time no word has been spoken to reconcile Christianity with evolution, or evolution with Christianity. And why? Because the two are one. What is evolution? A method of creation. What is its object? To make more perfect living beings. What is Christianity? A method of creation. What is its object? To make more perfect living beings. Through what does evolution work? Through love. Through what does Christianity work? Through love. Evolution and Christianity have the same Author, the same end, the same spirit. There is no rivalry between these processes. Christianity struck into the evolutionary process with no noise or shock.²

He quotes with approval Benjamin Jowett: "The glory of Christianity is not to be as unlike other religions as possible, but to be their perfection and fulfilment." Similarly he maintains that "the divinity of Christianity is not to be as unlike Nature as possible, but to be its coronation. . . . Christianity did not begin at the Christian era, it is as old as Nature; did not drop like a bolt from eternity, but came in the fullness of time."³

As usual when there is an opposition of theories, the truth lies neither with one nor with the other, nor even intermediately between the two, but in a combination or synthesis of them. There appear good grounds for postulating the existence of a higher kind of consciousness, rather vaguely signified by the term "spiritual", superior to the ordinary human consciousness or mental life, with its characteristic of constructive thought by means of ideas, as that is superior to the animal consciousness, which is relatively fettered to the sensory percepts of the moment. So far as we may judge by

¹ *The Ascent of Man*, pp. 331, 332.

² *Ibid.*, p. 438.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 439, 441.

our imperfect experience of this spirituality, it consists of a more independent and intimate apprehension of and intercourse with reality, a more direct engagement of our living essence with the living essence of other personalities and of the Universe. And it does appear as if one of the functions of religion is to facilitate this immediate contact and intercourse of men with God, and thereby with one another—a communion which moves towards a union, as phrases in the “spiritual” Gospel of St. John not uncertainly declare.

But this transcendent superiority of the spiritual life does not constitute it as wholly different from the merely human or even animal modes of existence. For the fuller truth perceived by the spiritual man does not contradict, but rather fulfils, the less adequate knowledge of the workaday intelligence of ordinary mortals, just as this latter seems in the main to agree with the immediate perceptions of the dog or the horse. And to take what Henry Drummond elsewhere called “the greatest thing in the world”, the devotion of a bird to its chicks and of human parents to their children are only limited forms of the love wherewith the Christian loves God and his neighbour and God loves all men. It is because of the essential continuity of the natural and the spiritual that the natural man may by God’s grace attain spirituality.

The specific quality of the spiritual life in its religious aspect is the subject of Dr. Rudolf Otto’s book, translated under the title *The Idea of the Holy*. The author attempts to analyse the religious consciousness and discovers these components: awe, the sense of overpowering greatness, stupor, ecstatic joy. But these emotions and modes of apprehension differ from their non-religious counterparts in virtue of a certain quality to which he gives the name “numinous”. Thus the awe or fear of God is unlike the fear of physical enemies and dangers, and is akin to the dread of the supernatural. “Its antecedent stage is ‘demonic dread’ (cf. the horror of Pan), with its queer perversion, a sort of abortive offshoot,

the 'dread of ghosts'.¹ We may suggest that it is because ghosts are supposed to come into contact with, to touch, not our bodies only, but our souls, that we shrink and shudder in their imagined presence.² "The fear of God", writes Dr. Otto, "has something spectral in it."³ The other religious emotions are similarly distinguishable from the corresponding emotions of ordinary existence. In particular, religious joy or rapture is "more, far more, than the mere natural feeling of being comforted".⁴ Yes; for it is the beginnings of the bliss of the beatific vision of, and of mystical union with, the Supreme Being.

We may add that there is the spiritual awareness of Nature, described by Wordsworth in the well-known lines:—

A sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air.

And there is also the spirituality of human love at its intensest, the love that draws souls into a communion more intimate than that mediated through the senses.

Various questions suggest themselves with regard to this spiritual life. First, is it only through Christianity that we can attain to it, or can it be mediated through other religions, or through non-religious activities, such as art, philosophy, human love? Considering the records of mystical experiences in other religions, such as Hinduism, and in philosophical cults, such as Neoplatonism, and also the apparently numinous character of some non-Christian art,⁵ and of romantic love in certain exalted moods, we can hardly deny the existence of

¹ *The Idea of the Holy*, p. 15.

² Cp. Lafcadio Hearn, in *Shadowings*, "Nightmare-Touch": "I venture to state boldly that the common fear of ghosts is *the fear of being touched by ghosts*—or, in other words, that the imagined supernatural is dreaded because of its imagined power to touch. Only to *touch*, remember—not to wound or to kill."

³ *The Idea of the Holy*, p. 14.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁵ Dr. Otto refers to the art of Egypt, China, Japan, and Tibet.—*Op. cit.* pp. 68, 69.

real spiritual life that has not been, consciously at least, acquired through Christ. On the other hand, the Christian is entitled to claim that his spiritual experience is of a purer and more vital character, as Sadhu Sundar Singh does when he compares Christian ecstasy with Yogic trance.¹ Besides, Christianity does appear to have promoted spirituality, not only in religious worship, but also in the apprehension of natural beauty characteristic of certain poets and artists of Christendom, and in the holiness of married love; for both these latter are much more frequent and intense in Christian civilization than elsewhere.²

This brings us to the question whether the spiritual is always and necessarily good. If we pay heed to common opinion, we shall incline to the view that there can be an evil or perverted spirituality, as there is an evil or perverted natural life. The very phrase, "evil spirit", suggests as much. That non-sensuous methods of communication and influence may be used for undesirable purposes is implied in the popular belief in pernicious dealings with the supernatural. In order to avoid such perversions it may be deemed advisable to acquire and develop spirituality primarily by means of the religious attitude and approach to God enjoined by Jesus.³

Thirdly, to what extent, if at all, did Jesus Himself teach the new birth into spiritual life? St. Paul undoubtedly did, and it appears, in the Gospel according to St. John, as attri-

¹ *The Sadhu*, by Streeter and Appasamy, pp. 135, 136.

² Chateaubriand wrote eloquently of the appreciation of natural beauty due to Christianity: "Il a fallu que le christianisme vînt chasser ce peuple de faunes, de satyres et de nymphes, pour rendre aux grottes leur silence, et aux bois leur rêverie. Les déserts ont pris sous notre culte un caractère plus triste, plus vague, plus sublime; le dôme des forêts s'est exhaussé; les fleuves ont brisé leurs petites urnes, pour ne plus verser que les eaux de l'abîme du sommet des montagnes: le vrai Dieu, en rentrant dans ses œuvres, a donné son immensité à la nature."—*Génie du Christianisme*, Deuxième Partie, livre IV, chap. i.

³ The undesirability of acquiring spiritual qualities without moral righteousness seems to be indicated in the rather mysterious remark of Jesus: "If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" The dishonest man would be likely to use spiritual wealth in a dangerous and evil manner.

buted to Our Lord. But can we support this by evidence from the other Gospels? Does His doctrine there concerning the Kingdom of God definitely imply the attainment by man of spiritual life?

At first sight there is a contradiction between the records. According to the Fourth Gospel Jesus definitely stated that the new birth through the Spirit into spiritual life was absolutely necessary for entrance into the Kingdom of God: "Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." But in St. Matthew we read otherwise: "Verily I say unto you, except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." Is to turn and to become like a child equivalent to the spiritual new birth, with or without the water of baptism? Surely not; it is moral conversion that is here indicated—a recapture of the simplicity and trustfulness of childhood, a return to a natural innocence and tender freshness, rather than an advance to the maturer experiences of spirituality. Granted that the former is a precursor of the latter, still the stress is all on the moral, not on the spiritual, condition of the higher life. And yet the opposition between these two points of view may not be so fundamental as at first appears. Wordsworth, in his great poem *Ode on the Recollections of Immortality*, described the spirituality native to childhood, the sense of the Divine in Nature which many enjoy most intensely in their early years. Is it possible that Our Lord was thinking of something of that sort?

However that may be, we can hardly doubt that He referred to the spiritual life several times in the Synoptic Gospels: when He uttered the parables representing the Kingdom of Heaven as a personal state of the soul (the Hid Treasure and the Pearl-Merchant), and in the sayings, "The Kingdom of God is within [or 'in the midst of'] you", and "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God." He also pointed to a higher stage of spirituality when He held out the hope of eternal

life for those who made great sacrifices in His behalf. The Gospel of the Kingdom of God evidently includes the Gospel of spiritual rebirth, just as it includes the Gospel of forgiveness. The outlook of Jesus in the Synoptics was wider than that of His followers. He looked for a world-wide good, a bringing of the whole of humanity and its environment under the complete control of God, involving a reformation and re-direction of the evolution of all life in every particular. Doubtless He would have assented to St. Paul's words when he wrote of the "hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the children of God". Jesus evidently regarded the attainment by human souls of the spiritual life as of supreme importance; but He did not concentrate on it in His general preaching as have some exponents of Christianity subsequently.

And therefore we may claim for Him that He set the ideals of man in a truer perspective. Apparently He did not think of the spiritual rebirth as occurring solely or for the first time through His personal influence during His career in Palestine. He spoke as if the fulfilment of the well-known principles of love for God and man—the practical acknowledgment of the already glimpsed Fatherhood of God and its moral consequences—were capable of leading unto life. His teaching on intercourse with God in trustful prayer and His occasional references to the Spirit of God in man apparently imply that these aspects of the spiritual life were not unfamiliar to His audience. And with this accords Peter's explanation of the phenomena at Pentecost: in olden times only a very few were inspired, but, as the prophet Joel predicted, the day would come when the Holy Spirit would be given to all people, irrespective of age or rank or sex.

Our Lord's presentation of the great purpose of God for mankind, of which He came as both Prophet and Agent, is far more comprehensive and sets the various aspects of it more truly in their mutual relations than did the teaching of later exponents of the Gospel. The concentration of the latter

on the spiritual rebirth tends to various misconceptions—to the undue disparagement of the secular achievements of man and of the human as human, to a somewhat egocentric pre-occupation with personal advancement, to an expectation of rapid exaltation and glorification, which really defeats itself, to a not altogether healthy religious introspection, and to a forced and artificial mysticism, such as we find in revivalistic movements. We may perhaps discern in the mind of Jesus a recognition of a nascent spirituality in man, "a childlike spirituality from which the race had lapsed and which *inter alia* He wished to restore, as a condition of further spiritual growth—a recognition which we should do well to recapture if we aspire to present the complete way of salvation, the whole Gospel.

This theory of a primitive spirituality which Our Lord essayed to restore has recently been worked out very attractively by Dr. A. Boyd Scott in a brilliant book, which he entitles *Christ, the Wisdom of Man*. To this condition he gives the name "piety". He conceives of it as a relatively undifferentiated communion with reality, with four nuclei contained within it—religion, morality, science, art. To quote Dr. Scott's own words:—

I propose that we should requisition this word *pietas* or *piety* as a convenient title for that primary address and communion; on man's part, towards his environment, in which his interests in reality were still fused in one commerce, and out of which, as from four inherent nuclei in it, in his developing interaction with the gradually detectable values in reality, there emerged those specific engagements of his spirit we call religion, morality, knowledge, and art.¹

These, he considers, became in course of time, not only differentiated, but also separated, and therefore wrongly developed. It was part of Christ's method of salvation, Dr. Boyd Scott thinks, to recover for man this *pietas*, in which the various spiritual faculties—religion, morality, knowledge, art—operate in harmony. He is sensible that He manifested

¹ *Christ, the Wisdom of Man*, p. 355.

this childlike simplicity of attitude to the Universe, this homely mysticism in which thought, will, emotion are synthesized, and that He essayed to elicit it in others. I am not concerned now to examine this fascinating hypothesis in detail, but I mention it as the testimony of one lover of Jesus that he thinks of Him, not as introducing spirituality for the first time into man, but as restoring and developing man's latent spiritual capacity; also that a full spirituality must be reared on intellectual and æsthetic foundations, as well as on religion and righteous conduct. Jesus devoted Himself rather to the two latter, but I think that we are justified in maintaining that Jesus displayed the childlike and responsive attitude to reality to which science and art are congenial. But this theory of the "piety" to which Jesus would restore man must be connected with the conception of the greater spirituality to be developed out of it, which leads to life everlasting.

But how did and does Jesus restore, stimulate, engender, develop the spiritual in man? How are we reborn in Him? Granted the hypothesis that Our Lord set Himself to restore the fourfold spirituality of man in its wholeness, yet He looked to the spirituality centred in religion to take the lead. Man was to be spiritually redeemed on a religious basis. He essayed to bring man through prayer into close connection with his Heavenly Father. This would enable God to exercise His creative power in engendering in human personalities the spiritual life. Thus the ego, formerly functioning in a mainly if not wholly conceptual manner, would begin to function spiritually—piercing as it were the barriers of sense, and entering into communion with God—in such manner as is implied in the words, "Closer is He than breathing, nearer than hands and feet."¹ Jesus did this by declaring the Fatherhood of God, as when He compared prayer to children asking their father for food, concluding, as St. Luke records, with the significant words: "How much more shall your Heavenly

¹ Tennyson, *The Higher Pantheism*.

Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him!" He did this also by personally representing God to men, and, we may venture to add, by bringing them through His own spirituality into touch with the spirituality of His Father.

But as a human being in the flesh He was limited in His influence. For that reason, as in the Fourth Gospel He is recorded as intimating, He must through death pass into a less restricted mode of existence, in which He could come into direct personal contact with the multitudes over the face of the earth. For when He hears that certain Greeks wished to see Him He replies by means of an analogy: "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit." This by itself would not signify a martyr's death, such as the wickedness of men brought about and necessitated. For we may suppose that, if mankind had not been in a state of terrible sinfulness, a comparatively gentle transition into a less material condition would have sufficed to enable Him, by means of His earthly experience, to kindle mankind spiritually and unite them to God.

It remains to elucidate the relation of the morality taught by Christ to the spiritual life communicated by Him. How far, let us ask, is the fulfilment of His precepts conditional on being born again and redeemed? Now it is obvious that Jesus did acknowledge and commend moral conduct among many who were not His adherents—in the Good Samaritan, for instance, and the woman who gave her little all to the Temple. However, it is to be supposed that such were not destitute of spirituality, since they may be presumed to have known and to have endeavoured to practise the first great commandment—to love God with all their heart and mind and will. On the other hand, we may gather that He recognized some moral goodness in Gentiles, to whom perhaps He attributed little or no spirituality—from His commendation of the merciful in the judgment of the nations, and from such remarks as these: "If ye love them that love you, what

credit is that to you? For even sinners love those that love them." "If ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the Gentiles the same?" And it is only reasonable to think that He valued the purely natural affection of kindred and friends. We may even imagine Him appreciating the moral worth of patriotism and the humanitarianism of the nobler schools of ancient philosophy.

From this as well as from His general method of teaching we may not uncertainly infer that Our Lord thought of righteous conduct and spirituality as growing together, mutually promoting one another, sometimes one and sometimes the other preceding in relative independence. And it appears that He believed, or came to believe, that after His sacrificial death He would be a great spiritual Personality, spiritually quickening those who gave themselves to Him, and thereby inspiring them with a heroic devotion to the Divine purposes and a penetrating sympathy for others. Such, at any rate, was the ethical and spiritual significance attributed to the Risen Christ both by St. Paul and by the St. John of the Gospel and the First Epistle.

It remains to consider the actual effect in detail of the spiritual life upon conduct; and here we find little or no definite information from Our Lord, but must be guided by the impression we have of His teaching and personality and by our own insight. In the first place, the discovery of the spiritual life, as the supreme value, will give incentive and direction to moral activity—indeed, to all the business of life. This, indeed, is practically implied by Our Lord when He holds out the hope of eternal life as an encouragement when men make great sacrifices for the sake of the Gospel. But it is not only as a personal compensation for sacrifices, but still more as a direct object of endeavours on behalf of the race, that the spiritual life should be held in view. The promotion of the spiritual growth of mankind should constitute the abiding and inspiring motive for all labours and enterprises. The affairs of life generally, both private and social, should

be ordered and regulated with a view to this. Materialism, in its various guises, will disappear only when wealth, comfort, education, art, science, are treated as instrumental to the development of a rich and many-sided spirituality.

Then, as to the moral virtues, they will become extended and refined and, so to speak, etherealized in the soul that is spiritually alive and active. Let us consider first the pre-Christian virtue of courage, so highly esteemed in nations that have won positions of dominance through frequent wars. Where the issue was constantly that of "world-might or downfall", and a downfall often involving abject slavery, it is no wonder that bravery in battle was accounted the most important of moral qualities. Along with this went the importance attributed to endurance in the practical ethics of the Stoic philosophy. Yet the religion of the Cross, in spite of its emphasis on the milder virtue of pity, does not yield to paganism in its manifestation of courage. Indeed, it surpasses paganism in affording an insight into the value of pain and loss and death—also of shame, which paganism did not require men to endure—as potent means to enhanced life, at least when voluntarily endured in the service of God. Here again we may refer to the words of Jesus, who spoke of gaining life by losing it. We may add that the sufferer who regards his pains and sorrows from a spiritual standpoint will be conscious of gaining thereby a power of sympathy drawing him closer to his fellow-mortals.

Truthfulness, from the merely natural standpoint, is vital to trust and co-operation, without some measure of which society could not exist. But if we desire, not merely a working arrangement with our neighbours, but growing intimacy and affection, we must display an engaging frankness inviting to absolute confidence. Akin to truthfulness in human intercourse is the pure and ardent passion for truth in scientific and philosophical inquiry, the will to know without fear or prejudice. It is surely no accident that in Christendom has the passion for scientific inquiry grown strongest and most

persistent. This on the spiritual level becomes the opening of the soul to receive the Spirit that leads into all truth, the turning to the light that streams from God, since "God is light". This living in the light produces spiritual fellowship, as it is written, "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another."

Temperance, as psychologists are fond of telling us, should be more than a discipline of the appetites and passions, but a sublimation of them for noble ends. But the spiritual man will carry this sublimation into the deeper regions of his soul. That which is known as the *libido*, the life-force, the *élan vital*, the will to live, being the root of the various instincts, must be transformed into the will to live spiritually and eternally. This will yield a wonderful joy, a profound sense of mastery, a conviction of kinship with all the children and creatures of the One Creative Parent.

And the supreme principle of conduct—love in all its beneficent forms—will in those that are spiritually alive become a power of access to and communion with the actual personalities of the beloved. In this holy fire the sundering veils and barriers will become transparent and melt into nothingness. Then shall come to pass that which is written, they shall "be perfected into one".

Morality is throughout necessary to the very existence of mankind. Were there no virtues, neither society nor individuals could remain alive. But the very same virtues whereby men have associated together and supported one another in all ages and under all conditions are through the Spirit of God developed into spiritual functions for spiritual life and communion, and thereafter for eternal life and perfect union with God and with one another in God.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CHRISTIAN *SUMMUM BONUM*

THE concept of good, in the sense of value, is essential to ethics. Right and good are manifestly related as means to end. For acts which cause harm are generally considered to be wrong, and acts which result in good are regarded as right. This is quite compatible with the view that what is right may also be good; that, for instance, kindness is not only a means to a more desirable life, but also an integral part of the more desirable life which it promotes.

But what precisely constitutes good or value? The obvious way to answer this question is to consider what experiences are immediately welcomed as good in themselves—good here and now while they are being experienced, apart from any consequences they may have. There are such experiences occurring frequently in human life. If we inquire what is their common characteristic, the obvious answer is that they are all pleasant. That is the name which we apply to all of them, recognizing that there are many different ways of being pleasant. Then for convenience' sake we consider this adjectival existence as substantival existence, and call it "pleasure". Having formed this abstract concept of various states of consciousness, we proceed to identify it with the good. According to this line of reasoning, the good in ultimate analysis is pleasure. Conversely, all experiences that we dislike are painful; and therefore pain is identified with evil. This is "ethical hedonism".

But in order to forestall the criticism that this is a low theory we hasten to assert that any experience which we like, whether sensuous, mental, or spiritual, is pleasant; and that spiritual experiences may be quite as pleasant as satisfactions of animal appetites—perhaps far more so, as mystics are ready to declare when they emerge from their ecstasies. All pleasures are in themselves, *qua* pleasure, good; though

some are to be avoided because of their consequences in destroying or diminishing other pleasures or in causing pain. Conversely, all pains are in themselves bad, though some are to be encountered because of their consequences in producing or increasing pleasures or in preventing other pains.

Again, it must be insisted that this theory is, far from being selfish, the basis of absolute unselfishness. Less pleasure for the agent is to be sacrificed for more pleasure for others, and less pain for the agent is to be suffered so as to prevent more pain for others. Hence exponents of this theory have considered themselves in full accord with the teaching of Jesus, particularly when He said, "Love thy neighbour as thyself."¹ The absolutely right conduct will under any circumstances be that which is likely to cause the greatest attainable surplus of pleasure over pain for all sentient beings. The *summum bonum* will be the maximum amount of pleasure which all sentient beings are capable of experiencing.

This identification of good with pleasure has been subjected to several criticisms, some serious, some of dubious validity; but they all witness to a deep-seated dissatisfaction with this analysis of the ultimate purpose of life and the Universe. On the other hand, the doctrine that the good is pleasure, or perhaps rather that pleasure is good, is to many apparently so obvious as to demand the philosopher's attention. As a step towards a solution we may suggest that it is rather happiness that is the desideratum, a belief which Dr. Boyd Scott says "would appear to have the whole horse-sense of mankind behind it".² This may at first sight seem an evasion, since is not happiness merely prolonged pleasure or a series of pleasures, a quality of consciousness consisting in a lengthy and relatively uninterrupted sequence of pleasant moments? Not altogether. To be in a state of happiness is not precisely equivalent to having a long and uninterrupted sequence of

¹ Particularly J. S. Mill, as quoted p. 105, and Constance Jones, quoted in *The Ethics of the Gospel*, p. 225.

² *Christ, the Wisdom of Man*, p. 153.

pleasure. Happiness is, so to say, more inward, more a condition of the personality, and therefore more satisfying. A weak state of happiness, of which the subject is barely conscious, is likely to seem more desirable than a somewhat more vivid pleasure or succession of pleasures of equal duration, and for that reason the value of one cannot be estimated in terms of the other in respect of mere strength.

We may refer to several philosophers and psychologists in support of this distinction:—

(1) Professor Everett:

Unexpected news, for example, may not cause the pain of a severe headache or of a wound to cease; but in spite of it the sufferer may find himself for a long time in a state of highly pleasurable feeling.¹

Perhaps we may equate this "highly pleasurable feeling" with happiness.

(2) Dean Rashdall:

Happiness represents satisfaction with one's existence as a whole—with the past and the future, as well as with the immediate present.²

(3) Professor Dewey:

Pleasure is transitory and relative, enduring only while special activity endures and having reference only to that activity. Happiness is permanent and universal. It results only when the act is such a one as will satisfy all the interests of the self concerned, or will lead to no conflict, either present or remote.³

(4) Mr. Graham Wallas ventures upon a more elaborate analysis. He distinguishes pleasantness from pleasure and happiness from pleasantness. A pleasure he considers to be a sensation, pleasantness a "feeling-tone", whereas happiness is something larger, a "more permanent type of consciousness", a satisfaction of the underlying personality. As he remarks, the word for happiness is different from that for pleasantness, or any pleasure, in Greek and Latin, in the modern European languages, and, I am told, in Sanskrit and Hebrew.⁴

¹ *Moral Values*, p. 110.

² *Theory of Good and Evil*, vol. ii, p. 57—quoted by Boyd Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

³ *Psychology*, p. 293—quoted by Boyd Scott, ditto.

⁴ *The Great Society*, p. 108.

All this is not equivalent to denying any value to pleasures, since they obviously enter into and enhance happiness. Perhaps we may compare the relation of pleasures to happiness to that of ornaments to beauty. Ornaments cannot take the place of beauty of design in a great building or other work of art. In moderation they enhance it; in superfluity they interfere with it. The mistake of the pleasure-seeker is like that of the artist who overloads his work with decorative additions. The equable balance and movement of the life being disturbed, there is a constant discontent which craves for reiterated alleviation in the form of thrills of pleasure.

Superior to happiness is the state known as "blessedness" or "bliss". Thomas Carlyle distinguished the two in the notable saying: "There is in man a higher than happiness; he can do without happiness, and instead thereof find blessedness."¹ This we may venture to define as spiritual happiness, and to regard it as superior to the ordinary kind for the same reason that happiness is superior to pleasure, as being more a state of the essential personality.

This line of reasoning enables us to approximate the utilitarian and the idealistic modes of ethical thought. So Professor McDougall:—

If this account of happiness is correct, it follows that to add to the sum of happiness is not merely to add to the sum of pleasure, but is rather to contribute to the development of the higher forms of personality—personalities capable, not merely of pleasure, as the animals are, but of happiness. If this conclusion be sound, it is of no small importance to the social sciences; it goes far to reconcile the doctrine of such moralists as T. H. Green with that of the more enlightened utilitarians; for the one party insists that the proper end of moral effort is the development of personalities, the other that it is the increase of happiness, and these we now see to be identical ends.²

There appears this objection to any theory of the good which represents it as something immediately to be experienced (in the form of earthly or human happiness), that it soon

¹ *Sartor Resartus*, Book II, chap. ix.

² *Introduction to Social Psychology*, 20th edition, p. 135.

passes and leaves only a vanishing memory; whereas any satisfactory good must be permanent, if not eternal. Especially if we assume progress or evolution in any form, or a religious view of life which encourages the hope of a better beyond death or in some reconstructed world, the pursuit of happiness here and now may appear a futile quest that obscures the real issues of existence. And yet if happiness is, or at least signifies, a good state of the personality, present happiness must be judged as rather favourable than otherwise to that development of the personality which will yield greater good in the future. Happiness is normally a sign of health, and without health there can be no satisfactory growth. Even pleasures may be sought as indicative of vital needs; still more, the sense of general well-being in which happiness very largely consists. Certainly there must be discipline, sometimes severe discipline and self-denial, a foregoing not only of pleasures but of ordinary happiness and acceptance of pain and sorrow, especially if either the individual or society has lapsed into a state of ill-health. Resolute acceptance of hardships may even yield a feeling of well-being, because stimulating and invigorating. But in normal conditions it is right to promote happiness, certainly in others and in less degree in ourselves, for the sake of ulterior welfare. The cult of happiness is right and necessary if it be duly related to idealistic and religious aims and hopes that open vistas into continuing progress away and away towards visions of eternal glory.

All this receives ample endorsement from Jesus Himself. He strove to make people happy, even in their fleeting earthly existence, and bade His disciples do likewise. Mercy, compassion, generosity, consolation, comfort, are throughout characteristic of His career and precepts as told in the pages of the Gospels. On the other hand, He expected His followers to be brave and self-sacrificing, to take up their crosses every day and to expect persecution and martyrdom, for the sake of a better world to come. But even these careers of cross-bearing were to have deep and abiding contentment and

homely joys in abundance, as He declares impressively: "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left home, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for My sake, and for the Gospel's sake, but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time." The obligation to suffer on the part of the pioneers of God's Kingdom was a necessity due to the general *malaise* of mankind, doubtless spiritually strengthening, in any case compensated for by present happiness and even bliss; while for the general mass of drifting humanity His message was predominantly one of relief and peace of heart—"rest unto your souls", as He expressed it. And how eager He was to deliver the sick and sorrowing from their bodily distresses and griefs of heart! No doubt the motive for mercy was very much that of eliciting gratitude out of which would spring the love which is essential to the children of God and leads to life eternal.¹ But this was implied, not obtruded. He accepted men's natural desire to be happy as entirely right and laudable, reminding them that they should seek to make one another happy. We may even gather that, though He believed that a pleasure-seeking life is a bad preparation for the life after death, nevertheless that happiness now tends to happiness hereafter, since happiness signifies health of soul, and health makes for growth in this world and beyond.²

And then Jesus was fond of declaring the joy and bliss of entrance into and life in the Kingdom of God. He tells His disciples to leap for joy when they find themselves hated and shunned and reproached, because that will mean a great reward in Heaven. He compares the joy of the discovery of the Kingdom to the delight in finding a treasure. The word "blessed" seems to have been frequently on His lips. His comparison of the Kingdom of God to a feast suggests that it will afford plenty of enjoyment. When we turn to the Fourth

¹ Vide *The Ethics of the Gospel*, p. 231.

² Dr. Boyd Scott does well to point out how Our Lord seemed to envisage happiness as rooted in the home life of God's children, particularly in the parable of the Prodigal Son.—*Christ the Wisdom of Man*, pp. 182-185.

Gospel we find joy emphasized as a characteristic of the new life, as when Jesus prays that His joy might be fulfilled in His disciples, and perhaps we may regard the miracle at Cana as intended to symbolize by means of the newly created wine the higher joy of those that have been reborn of the Spirit.

Our Lord undoubtedly encouraged people to look forward to exalted happiness in the world beyond as to something very good. In spite of His appeals for heroic virtue in the present, with the renunciation of much that is dear to the heart of man and the courting of extreme suffering in various forms, there is much in His teaching that indicates that He set a very high value on happiness, both as a means to and as a constituent of the good purposed by God for His children.

If utilitarianism represents the sober common sense of man, the opposing school of "ethical idealism" expresses rather, as its name suggests, man's idealism, his consciousness of imperfection and self-contradiction, his aspirations towards something away and beyond. To people of this idealistic disposition and to others in idealistic moods what they passionately crave is not to enjoy life, but to be or become in some way admirable or excellent. Not happiness, but perfection is to these the moral aim. The very thought of happiness in their present abhorrent imperfection is repellent.

This phase of ethical thought tends to seek a metaphysical basis. For the perfection that man yearns to become is so pressing and urgent as to appear real and alive—indeed, the most real and living entity in the Universe. There is, he wishes to assure himself, an eternal perfection that is striving to reproduce itself in him. His restless longings are symptoms of the travail of the Infinite working to conform his personality to Its own image. So T. H. Green writes of "the self-realization or reproduction in" man's consciousness "of an eternal consciousness".¹ He says that "human action is only explicable

¹ *Prolegomena to Ethics*, § 74.

by the action of an eternal consciousness, which uses" the processes and functions of the soul "as its organs, and reproduces itself through them".¹ This metaphysical theory is obviously adapted to religion. Indeed, T. H. Green occasionally uses the name God as a synonym for the eternal consciousness.²

The ethical end on the human side is described as "the full realization of the capabilities of the human soul".³ But this is not attained by each in isolation. The "true good" "is ultimately or in principle the idea of a satisfaction for a self that abides and contemplates itself as abiding, but which can only so contemplate itself in identification with some sort of society; which can only look forward to a satisfaction of itself as permanent on condition that it shall also be a satisfaction of those in community with whom alone it can think of itself as continuing to live".⁴ The central principle of this realization or development of the personality is morality itself. "In our view", he writes, "the virtuous character is good, not as a means to a *summum bonum* other than itself, but as in principle identical with the *summum bonum*."⁵ But the complete good includes far more than morality or virtue; it is "the full realization of the capacities of the human soul".⁶

When anyone conceives a divine discontent, when he becomes conscious of sins and futilities and conflicts and feels the surge within him of nobler life and aspires after an ideal beyond, such a one is apt to be more concerned with his own personality than with the welfare of the general mass of mankind. The idealist can hardly help adopting an aristocratic attitude to the world, seeing that so very few appear to experience at all intensely these longings and strivings. This appears to be one reason at any rate why the exponents of this school of ethical thought manifest a certain egoism in their formulation of the moral principle. Certainly the self whose capabilities are to be realized is a social self; the welfare of the agent is

¹ *Prolegomena to Ethics*, § 82.

² E.g. *Ibid.*, §§ 177, 182, 185, 191, 192.

³ *Ibid.*, § 286.

⁴ *Ibid.*, § 232.

⁵ *Ibid.*, § 294.

⁶ *Ibid.*, § 371.

bound up with the welfare of his neighbours. But as they phrase the matter, it would appear that one should seek the good of others only because it is somehow involved in one's own. "His own permanent well-being", writes T. H. Green, "he thus necessarily presents to himself as a social well-being."¹ The favourite term of F. H. Bradley in *Ethical Studies*, "self-realization", has an uninviting aspect, especially when we are told that "what we aim at is self, and self as a whole; in other words, that self as a whole is, in the end, the content of our wills".² He asserts emphatically that "man is a social being; he is real only because he is social, and can realize himself only because it is as social that he realizes himself".³ But this suggests that in the last resort the importance of his neighbours to the individual is that they constitute means to his own self-realization. F. H. Bradley expresses the egoism implicit in this doctrine more crudely and clearly than does T. H. Green.⁴

But egoism is not only morally wrong but psychologically false. Dr. F. R. Tennant, in his excellent article on Self-Realization in the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, disputes the theory that man necessarily aims at his own realization or satisfaction or development, particularly in behaviour to which we should attribute high moral value:—

Not realization, whether assertion or development, of the self is the essential rule of conduct, but rather the use of the self and all its powers and talents for the furtherance of the common, as well as of the individual agent's, welfare. Contribution and service thus take the pre-eminence over self-development and self-culture in the ethical ideal; and realization of the self can enter into the end only in so far as self-realization is compatible with, and conducive to, the common good.

The ethical idealists, in their attempt to express the soaring

¹ *Prolegomena to Ethics*, § 232.

² *Ethical Studies*, 1927 edition, p. 71.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

⁴ See also Professor Muirhead, quoted in *The Ethics of the Gospel*, p. 234. *Ethical Studies* preceded *Prolegomena to Ethics* by about seven years. It is perhaps significant that the author of the latter abstains from references to the former.

aspirations of the soul, have missed the plain objective altruism of the utilitarians.

Yet there is much in the Gospel with which ethical idealism is in accord. As utilitarianism is an exposition of "Love thy neighbour as thyself", so does ethical idealism express the command, "Be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect", and the great doctrine of the sonship of man to God. That the eternal and infinite goodness of God strives to reproduce itself in the personalities of men is one of the great thoughts of the Johannine writings. Furthermore, Our Lord did consider and sympathize with the individual's concern with his own failings and hankerings after something better. For He spoke with approval of the publican smiting his breast, and to the young man who wistfully asked, "What lack I yet?" He explained what he ought to do to become perfect. Some preoccupation with the state of one's own personality, its present imperfection, its potentialities, and its ideal of perfection, Jesus evidently recognized as right. Yet a too persistent concentration on the subject's own moral progress, with comparative indifference to the needs of the world around, He found in an unlovely form in the self-righteousness of the religious leaders of the nation. Indeed, the ethic of self-realization tends to become a form of Pharisaism, as indeed does any doctrine that makes the virtue of the agent, instead of the welfare of mankind, the supreme moral interest. Jesus manifested the transcendence of self-realization by declaring love to be the central principle of the ideal character, the love by which a man accounts another's welfare, even an enemy's, as of equal moment with his own. And He further accentuated selflessness by His enunciation of the method of salvation, that if one is to win life one must lose it.¹

If utilitarianism emphasizes "Love thy neighbour as thyself", and ethical idealism emphasizes "Be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect", what is their higher synthesis?

¹ See Dr. Boyd Scott, *op. cit.*, pp. 199-203.

We are impelled to search for a more inclusive ethical principle, which shall embrace the broad and placid objectivity of the doctrine of universal happiness with the concentrated and aspiring subjectivity of the conception of personalities as foci of Divine life. An attempt to give such a principle is to be found in Dr. L. T. Hobhouse's *The Rational Good*. He maintains that good is essentially the harmony of feeling with experience, of the subjective with the objective. The rational good is an elaborate system of this harmony. It is the business of reason to produce such a system, harmoniously relating the various constituents. "The rationality of the good", he writes, "involves its impartial and consistent application to the world of sentient experience. That is to say, it is the function of the rational impulse in practice to embrace the world in a single system of purposes, just as it is the function of the rational in cognition to embrace the world in a single system of thought." "This system", he continues, "involves a double harmony, harmony of the mind with itself and harmony of the mind with the world."¹ Dr. Hobhouse points clearly to the fallacy of egoism: "The principle of self-preference—whether of an individual or of a group—involves inconsistencies and is by definition irrational."² He proceeds to indicate how the reason must and does control and harmonize the instinctive impulses, developing rather than repressing, and also organizes external conditions to suit the individual life. He then sketches the operation of the reason in social development:—

The whole mass of social institutions, of philosophical, ethical, and religious conceptions, as well as the heritage of the imaginative world, of literature and art, must of course rank among social developments and owe their rise and progress to the action of mind on mind a million times repeated. . . . The supreme development—that which embraces all that is good in all subordinate developments—is that which, bringing this central directive force from infancy to maturity, welds all partial fulfilments into a coherent scheme and moves to the harmony of experience and feeling as a whole.³

¹ *The Rational Good*, p. 80.

² *Ibid*, p. 82.

³ *Ibid*, p. 110.

Again:—

The building up of isolated impulses into a self or person, and the union of separate individuals in a social bond, may be regarded as the two great movements of synthesis.

The harmonizing or unifying principle appears in two forms which “may be briefly designated the principle of personality and the principle of love”, the former unifying the individual, the latter unifying society.¹ Dr. Hobhouse regards his theory of the good as a synthesis of the utilitarianism represented by J. S. Mill and the ethical idealism expounded by T. H. Green, avoiding their errors and combining their excellencies.

The value of this exposition of the good seems to consist in its broad and impartial objectivity combined with its relation to the vital springs of action centred in personalities. However questionable or inadequate we may think Dr. Hobhouse’s view of the functions of feeling and reason, we should not fail to admire his conception of a great whole of living good rich in happiness and rationally ordered—a vast system articulated into numerous interests and experiences, in which individuals participate as they are severally capable. This compares well with the abstract analysis of good by the utilitarian into pleasure or happiness, and with the subjectivity of the ethical idealist’s identification of it with self-realization. The good, we feel constrained to admit, must be something broad and deep and rich and ramifying, personal and yet super-personal, peaceful and yet instinct with intense springing energy.

But does Dr. Hobhouse, like T. H. Green, postulate an “eternal consciousness”, as a necessary implication of his ethical creed? He remarks that “men [that is ordinary, non-philosophical people] will not recognize allegiance to anything so abstract and impalpable as the moral order; . . . they need a God. A personal God is the incarnation of the unity which the moral judgment requires”.² Yet he seems doubtful whether this postulate is logically cogent. He does, however, go as far as to say that “the reality which the moral order

¹ *The Rational Good*, p. 111.

² *Ibid.*, p. 149.

implies is a spiritual principle, which from its most salient feature we may call briefly the principle of love".¹ He concludes by pointing out the remarkable agreement between ethics and evolution, inasmuch as the ethical principle and the tendency of evolution both consist largely in co-operation: "The flower of the evolutionary process is the ethical spirit."²

What does Jesus offer us in this quest? How does He help us, either theoretically to conceive the ethical end or practically to travel towards it? He offers us God. For He assures us that it is the will of the Almighty to produce and establish that manifold harmony of life in which all who will may participate to the utmost limit of their capacities; and this, not merely by inspiring in them the righteous will, but also by affording the external conditions whereby the good may be secured and enabled to develop to its perfection. That I take it is the significance of His fundamental doctrine, the Kingdom of God. That after which men have longed and striven, mocked by illusions, misled by false attractions—that full and growing satisfaction, happiness, rich and ardent life, in individual and in humanity—He said might be if they would conform their wills to the Divine Will; would inevitably be, since God would gently persuade them to do so. The quest for mere happiness tends to futility; the quest for mere virtue tends to egoism and hypocrisy. But the quest for the Kingdom of God leads unto life, the life of selfless love, permanent and increasing. The good, as Jesus portrays it, is broad-based upon the will, the very being, of God, though achieved not without the goodness and effort of men, and its attainment is absolutely sure, and participation in it will be more than satisfying. The greatness of Christ's conception of good, as compared with the conceptions entertained by the various schools of philosophers, is due to the fact that, while it includes and endorses all that they have to teach, there is so much of God in it. It partakes of the Divine eternity and infinitude.

¹ *The Rational Good*, p. 156.

² *Ibid.*, p. 161.

Yet perhaps we should not exactly equate the Kingdom of God with the *summum bonum*, the supreme good above and beyond all other possible or conceivable realizations of value. When the Kingdom shall have come, which Jesus seems to have expected would be before very long, all things will not immediately have become so excellent that nothing better may be looked for. The world once brought under the rule of God will henceforth develop as God wills it, from stage to stage of heightening life. This will involve—for some sooner, for others later—the transition from mortality to immortality, to eternal life, in which, as Jesus said, men cannot die any more (Luke xx. 36). Eternal life is thus one aspect of the individual's attainment of the *summum bonum*. There are problems here as to the relation of universal to individual progress, a full discussion of which would take us far into the eschatology of the Gospels and the modern doctrine of evolution. But the main outlines of Our Lord's promise of good are fairly clear: it is reconstituted and enhanced and increasing life, life that transcends and abolishes death, life of many souls in intimate harmony and love, life that is for ever nourished by the life of God, a living Universe supported and ordered and glorified by the power and love of God.

We may venture to supplement what Jesus is recorded to have said concerning the good purposed by God, by means of the glimpses of the Divine ideal that were vouchsafed to His most famous disciple. St. Paul wrote that it is God's intention through Christ to "reconcile all things unto Himself, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens" (Col. i. 20); to "sum up [or 'gather together'] all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth" (Eph. i. 10). All beings and things in the Universe are to be united in a harmonious fellowship in Christ. In one mysterious passage he hints at this being the prelude to an even more intimate union of everything with God the Father: "And when all things have been subjected unto Him, then

also shall the Son Himself be subjected unto Him that did subject all things unto Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 28). We need not here discuss this strange Christology—the apparent expectation that the Son of God's sovereignty will eventually cease, and that He will *become* one of God's subjects; rather may we concentrate our attention on the phrase, "God all in all", as St. Paul's expression for the complete fulfilment of the Divine purpose; "the *summum bonum*."

God will be all in all; that is, immanent in all beings to the utmost capacity of each. God and the totality of all other entities will live together in complete correspondence and interpenetration. Each creature will live in the closest spiritual union with the Creator, and therefore in harmony with all other creatures, but, we may suppose, in specially intimate union with some.

Is this the culmination beyond which no advance is conceivable? We would rather think that even when God is to every being all that each can receive of Him, yet that each in this communion must grow so as to receive of God yet more and more, at the same time communing more richly with other creature spirits. Shall we be very bold and postulate a growth even in the Divine Infinity, that God may continually respond to the ever-growing life of His children? It were well to say that we do not know, but we have a sure hope, based on our knowledge of the love of God, that all things will be supremely good.

Forecasts of Heaven are apt to be unsatisfying and tedious. Yet there have been some on earth who have claimed to have tasted bliss ineffable in brief moments of mystical rapture—moments that have seemed to lift them out of time into eternity. Even love of other souls has at its intensest this "eternal" quality. Do not these experiences suggest, however faintly, the possibility of eternal satisfaction? Or do we desire assurance that such variety and colour and movement as make earthly existence enjoyable will be constituents also of

eternal bliss? We must speak abstractly when we talk of Heaven; for "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared". Yet we can assume the concreteness and movement without which life would not be life, even though it would be presumptuous to attempt to picture it.

But is there not a yet more serious objection to the belief in a perfect good, of which we should at least candidly show ourselves aware, though we may have to confess that we are unable to make any effective reply to it? It is this, that any result which has not been attained in the infinity of past time is never likely to be attained. The endless perfection of the Universe has not been attained; therefore it probably never will be. Therefore our hopes are vain. Against this disheartening conclusion, not only our Christian faith, but our human heart, vehemently protests, as in the stirring words of William James: "If this fight be not a real fight, in which something is eternally gained for the Universe by success, it is no better than a game of private theatricals from which one may withdraw at will."¹

Though we confess our inability to solve this problem, we may yet venture to indicate where we think the principle of its solution lurks. Is it not in the relation of time to eternity, or perhaps rather of the temporal becoming to the eternal being? Since, as Jesus taught us, God is love, we may conjecture that He both supports absolute perfection and also initiates a process or processes in which good under the influence of love grows from less to more. We, it appears, live in such a process, and as children of God it behoves us to promote its movement along with His aid till it culminates in the perfect.

In spite of questions, obscurities, antinomies, such as beset us when we essay to think metaphysically—that is, consistently—on any aspect of reality, we will not allow ourselves to be bereft of hope and duty. We "know Him whom

¹ *The Will to Believe*, p. 61.

we have believed", and are confident that we are called, even in our mortal frailty and ignorance, to take our parts, very humble, yet maybe quite essential, in bringing into being that absolute and perfect good to which the whole cosmic process by our Almighty Father is most surely directed.

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